



County of Brant

IMPROVED PARIS AREA TRANSIT SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM

FINAL REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Study Approach.....	1
2.	BACKGROUND AND CURRENT SITUATION	3
2.1	County Taxi By-Law	4
3.	STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION.....	5
4.	PEER REVIEW	7
4.1	General Characteristics	7
4.2	Performance Indicators	8
4.3	Summary	8
5.	TRANSIT SERVICE IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS	11
5.1	Transit Service Types	11
5.2	Infrastructure – Stops, Shelters	12
5.3	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)	13
5.4	Provincial Funding	14
6.	TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT PLAN - RECOMMENDED APPROACH	15
6.1	County Administration for Transit Services	16
7.	RECOMMENDATIONS	17

Exhibits

Exhibit 4-1: Summary of Peer Transit Systems	10
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Appendix

A – 2008 County Transportation Master Plan - Demand Management Section

B – Transportation Demand Management Funding Application to Province

1. INTRODUCTION

The County of Brant's 2008 Transportation Master Plan (TMP) identified a desire to reduce automobile dependency within the County, particularly in the main urban area of the County, the community of Paris and recommended that the County consider Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies to reduce auto use by improving transit service in the Paris community in order to increase transit use (Appendix A). Located immediately northwest of the City of Brantford, Paris is a designated urban growth centre for the County and has strong commuting patterns to and from Brantford.



As a primarily rural municipality, the County of Brant currently exhibits limited opportunities for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies to reduce the number of auto trips except for the potential of an increased role for public transit in the Paris area.

The County currently contracts with Paris Transportation Service (Paris Taxi) to provide specialized, pre-booked transportation services throughout the County including Paris for residents with temporary or permanent physical disabilities or who are intellectually challenged. Otherwise, there is no formal public transit service operating in Paris. Instead, transportation alternatives to the private automobile consist of taxis. To encourage greater use of the taxi services, the County revised its Taxi By-Law in 2009 to provide the operators with flexibility in the services they provide and their pricing structure. However, the services provided by the local taxi companies are generally unknown to residents and thus see less than optimal use. By increasing awareness of the services offered, it is anticipated that greater use of the taxi services would occur leading to potential improvements to the service and overall added benefits to the Paris community. This action would also complement the County's strategic transportation goal of providing more travel mode choices for residents.

The County applied for and received a funding grant from the Province under the provincial TDM Municipal Grant Program (Appendix B), to assist in identifying a suitable transit service for residents of Paris including a link to the City of Brantford, and for promoting the use of public transit through enhanced marketing and promotion as recommended in the 2008 TMP. As a result, the County has undertaken this study with the goal of "increasing local transit ridership within the Paris community through provision of an improved, more publicly visible local transit service, and with improved links to Brantford Transit service" in Brantford.

This report presents the recommended strategy for increasing the use of the existing public transportation resource, taxis, within Paris. Included is an identification of the demand for transportation services, public transit service options and a recommended pilot program to increase awareness and use of the existing taxi services.

1.1 Study Approach

The background work leading to the preparation of this report has involved the following activities:

- Research and analysis of population demographics and future population and growth trends as well as changes in development patterns;

- A Peer Review of transit services in similar-sized communities to provide the context for judging ridership potential and costs for possible service options for the Paris community;
- Meetings with stakeholders including County staff, members of the public and business leaders to measure and evaluate the need for a transit service;
- Meetings with key businesses and local transportation providers to discuss the potential benefits of a transit service.

At the outset, meetings with County staff were held to finalize the study work plan, understand the local issues and to identify information requirements and sources. In addition, the consulting team visited the study service area in order to understand the community's characteristics and to gain an understanding of the logistics pertaining to potential transit service options.

2. BACKGROUND AND CURRENT SITUATION

The population of the Paris community is approximately 11,200. The following are the key demographic and transportation characteristics for the community:

- % of population over 55: 27.8% (approximately 3,100)
- Median Age: 40.2 years

- Journey to work Mode share:
 - o Car, as driver: 86.2%
 - o Car, as passenger: 6.3%
 - o Transit: 0.5%
 - o Walking/Cycling: 5.9%
 - o Other: 1.1%

- Place of work:
 - o Within Brant County: 34.1%
 - o In Brantford or Six Nations Reserve: 29.5%
 - o Outside Brant County, Brantford and Six Nations Reserve: 36.2%

The average age is high with the percentage of the population over age 55 at a significant level of 27.8%. This indicates that Paris has a large seniors population which is consistent with its profile as a retirement community.

The Journey-to-Work mode share data clearly emphasizes that the car is the dominant form of transportation involving 92.5% of all trips, while walking/cycling and “other” both out-number transit use which reflects the absence of an effective public transit service in the community.



Workplace destinations are diverse with an approximate equal share of destinations split three ways between the three key locations within and outside Brant County and Brantford. Almost two-thirds of employed residents work outside the County. The City of Brantford is an important destination.

As noted in the Introduction, the County now provides public transit service in the form of a specialized transit service for persons with disabilities through a contract with Paris Transportation. The cost of this service is approximately \$70,000 annually based on a per trip cost of \$20.00 for a guaranteed minimum of 3,500 trips per year. This cost structure is consistent with similar services in other Ontario municipalities.

Until June 1996, a regular public transit service was operated within the community of Paris and connecting to the City of Brantford. This service was operated by the City of Brantford under contract with the then Town of Paris. The Town covered the net operating cost of the service which, at that time, was approximately \$140,000 annually.

This study commenced in August 2010 and the work plan was designed to follow the terms of the County’s TDM grant application to the Province involving the following key tasks:

- Develop a suitable route and schedule for an improved public transit service between Paris and the City of Brantford;
- Prepare tender documents in order to establish a sole contractor to provide the service. This process would involve defining the route and service levels to be operated, the terms and conditions for the operation of the service, issuing a tender call, receiving and evaluating the tender, then awarding the tender to the successful bidder;
- Initiate and promote the service, monitor its progress and prepare a report for consideration by County Council after a trial period of 6 to 9 months to determine the success of the service and whether the service should be continued and any necessary improvements.

At the outset of the project, the consultant and County staff determined that further consultation was required with stakeholders and the current service providers (taxi operators) to determine the need for a transit service and the appropriate level of service. On the basis of feedback received through that process, the County would then define the service and approach needed to deliver the service. This represented an additional but important step which was not identified in the TDM application.

2.1 County Taxi By-Law

The County's taxi licensing By-law was revised in 2009 with the intent of providing taxi operators with flexibility in offering transportation services and pricing. A review of the By-law was undertaken to determine its relevance and potential impact on any consideration for introducing a formal transit service or for the ability of the taxi operators to better meet the transportation needs of the community.

The review confirmed that, as currently written, the By-Law does provide taxi operators with considerable flexibility in offering transportation services compared to taxi by-laws in other jurisdictions. However, at the same time, this flexibility, specifically the lack of a limit on the number of licensed vehicles, the ability to provide special fares and provide shuttle services, would limit the ability to establish a regular public transit service within either Paris or between Paris and Brantford since the taxi operators could potentially under-cut the service. As such, it would be difficult for the County to establish, by contract, a regular transit service without a major change to the taxi By-law to re-introduce limits to licences and fares as is the standard in other jurisdictions.

3. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Focus group meetings were held with 18 stakeholders, senior County staff and the two existing taxi operators, Paris Taxi and Grand River Cab, in the County. The individuals represented a cross-section of stakeholders in the County including the health, education, social services, seniors, persons with disabilities sectors of the community. There were also representatives from the City of Brantford/Brantford Transit in view of their past involvement in providing public transit service to Paris. The purpose of this meeting was to identify and attempt to quantify the need for a transit service, key destinations, frequency of use and financial considerations (cost of service, fares).

Other information resources which identified the need for a transit service in the County were reviewed and included the research work associated the preparation of the County's TMP and current work by the Grand River Community Health Centre which has been highlighting the need for a transit service in the County to meet the needs of seniors.

Personal and telephone contact was made with the taxi operators. The purpose of these discussions were to understand the service they currently offer, the nature of the taxi services within the County, the demand for the services and any operating or customer-related issues.

Meetings were held with County staff to determine existing involvement in existing specialized transit service, currently contracted to Paris Taxi, and the nature of the County's taxi By-Law governing the operation of taxis.

Results of Consultation

The two-hour focus group meeting provided the following insight into the need for transit service in Paris:

- The primary need was for a service linking Paris and Brantford, either downtown or the hospital and malls. There was also an expressed need for service within Paris and further afield within the County;
- The primary users would be teenagers, students, young workers (teenagers and those in their early twenties) and seniors as well as those with limited income;
- Key destinations within Paris included the sports complex, downtown, health centres (doctors' offices and clinics), seniors complexes (2) and shopping areas;
- A service was needed primarily Monday to Friday but also on Saturdays and Sundays. The service should meet the needs of those working within the Paris community but also those working in various locations within Brantford including downtown Brantford, the industrial area, the hospital and malls;
- The service should be available a minimum of once per hour and from 6am to 10pm on weekdays;
- A suitable fare would be \$2.00 to \$3.00 within Paris. A higher fare to Brantford was recognized as being warranted but there should be the ability to transfer to Brantford Transit services.

The focus group discussion also revealed that there was limited knowledge and understanding of the services currently offered by the two local taxi companies although there was some concern about their ability to meet the needs of residents in terms of capacity, timeliness and cost. Current taxi fares to travel to many destinations within Paris is high, averaging over \$7.00 per trip.

The meetings and discussions with the taxi operators indicated that:

- Grand River Cab offers regular, scheduled service into Brantford, based on demand, for a fare of \$6.00 (adults), \$4.50 for seniors. GR reported that they had been carrying approximately 10 people per day during August and September. Paris taxi offers a similar service also for \$6.00 but did not provide information regarding users.
- Grand River Cab also offers a shuttle service within Paris for a flat fare of \$3.00 along Grand River Street.
- Both operators noted that the County's taxi By-Law allowed each operator flexibility in the service they offered but expressed concern that there was no limit on the number of taxi licences or a set drop rate (minimum fare). As a result, one operator could potentially under-cut the other
- Concern was expressed about the involvement by the County in operating or contracting a regular transit service in Paris or the County as this would mean that potential business would be taken away from the taxi operators.

4. PEER REVIEW

In view of the interest by stakeholders in re-establishing a formal public transit service within the Paris community including a link to the City of Brantford, it is helpful to look at the experience in other similar municipalities as a basis for understanding what could be provided in the Paris community and what the likely result, in terms of ridership and costs, might be. This section presents a review of transit services operating in twelve Ontario municipalities of similar size to the Paris community. Direct comparison between any two municipalities is not intended and is not advisable since every municipality has its own characteristics. Details on the operation of the systems in Collingwood, Brockville, Cobourg, Huntsville, Elliot Lake, Kenora, Port Hope, Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Wasaga Beach, Leamington and Orangeville are presented, based on 2009 data provided by the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA). The information is grouped into two categories:

- General characteristics: information describing the municipal systems such as population served, type of operation, hours of service, fares and ridership; and
- Performance Indicators: operational measurements taking into account the population of the community and ridership. These include ridership per capita, and costs per vehicle hour and per capita.

Exhibit 4-1 presents the details and data on the operation systems of the peer municipalities.

4.1 General Characteristics

The following are the key characteristics and trends of the peer systems.

Population Served – the population served by the transit services ranges from 6,700 in Kenora to 28,200 in Orangeville. In eight of the municipalities, the area served by transit is less than the population indicating that there is a rural population which is not served.

Method of Operation – Eleven of the 12 municipalities contract their transit system to a private company. In all instances, the private company is an existing local transportation provider (school bus operator). In the remaining municipality, Brockville, the transit service is operated directly by the municipality using municipal employees.

Type of Transit Service – All systems have a fixed route operation; most of the systems offer a parallel accessible service in addition to the fixed route system.

Fleet Size and Peak Vehicles – fleet size ranges from 2 to 4 vehicles, and the number of vehicles operated in the peak period ranges from 1 to 2. Four of the municipalities require all vehicles to operate the service and the remaining systems have one or more vehicles as a spare.

Number of Routes – All systems, except Fort Erie and Leamington, have two or more routes serving the municipality.

Span of Service – the hours of operation are typically 10 to 12 hours per weekday, from around 7:00AM to close to 7:00PM with shorter hours on Saturday. Only three systems offer Sunday service, and only one (Wasaga Beach) operates holidays.

Service Frequency – services typically operate on an hourly schedule. Only Collingwood and Orangeville operate every 30 minutes. Collingwood operates 30 minute headways on two of its routes during the “rush hours” (7AM – 9AM, 2:30PM – 5:30PM).

Annual Ridership – ridership ranges from 15,300 in Leamington to 137,958 in Elliot Lake. One system has a ridership below 20,000, three of the systems have ridership in the 20,000 to 49,000 range, five of the systems have ridership between 50,000 and 99,000 annually, and two systems have ridership greater than 100,000. Elliot Lake is unusual with a ridership level of 137,958 in 2009, likely as a result of the high senior population and hilly terrain that limits walking and cycling. Ridership in 2009 was not available for Huntsville.

Annual Revenue Hours – this is the total number of hours of transit service provided annually and ranges from 2,000 in Port Colborne to 10,245 in Collingwood.

Total Annual Operating Cost – ranges from \$161,838 in Wasaga Beach to \$596,931 in Collingwood.

Fares – typical adult cash fares are \$2.00 with reduced fares for buying tickets/tokens, and for seniors and students. Monthly passes are between \$50-\$60, with some systems offering a discounted monthly pass to seniors and students.

Annual Passenger Revenue – varies from \$17,406 in Wasaga Beach to \$238,499 in Elliot Lake.

Annual Net Cost – ranges from \$114,689 in Kenora to \$496,996 in Collingwood.

4.2 Performance Indicators

These are key indicators for measuring transit performance taking into account the population of the community, the level of service and fare, and are derived from the foregoing information.

Revenue-hours per Capita – this indicator expresses the amount of service provided in the community on the basis of population and ranges from 0.11 to 0.83. The average is 0.47 revenue hours per capita.

Rides per Capita – this is the number of trips taken on the transit service in a year divided by the population. This ranges from 0.77 to 11.50. The average is 4.81.

Cost per Vehicle Hour – this indicator is the total cost to provide transit service divided by the number of revenue hours per year. The value ranges from \$39.81/hour to \$66.36/hour. The average is \$53.05.

Net Cost per Capita – this is the net cost, or investment required, after revenues on a per capita basis. This value ranges from \$5.19 to \$33.13, with an average of \$16.87.

Revenue/Cost Ratio – this value indicates the percentage of the operating cost recoverable from transit fares. It ranges from 11% to 53%, with an average of 26%. However, most small systems have a cost recovery rate of 20% to 30%.

4.3 Summary

The experiences of the peer transit services indicate the following:

- Transit service typically operates Monday to Saturday, and usually not on Sundays or holidays. Service operates for 10 to 12 hours per day until about 6-7 pm;
- Ridership levels range between 0.77 and 8.53 rides per capita for systems with 1-2 routes, and between 1.17 and 11.50 rides per capita for systems with 3 or more routes. The average is 4.8 rides per capita;
- Annual operating costs range from \$161,838 to \$596,931;
- The majority of transit service is contracted to a private operator, although buses are typically purchased by the municipality and provided to the contractor.

Based on the experience in the peer communities, a formal transit service in the Paris community could involve the following ridership and cost characteristics for a fixed route or demand-response service using two vehicles (small or large buses) operating 6 days per week, 11 hours per day:

- Annual ridership of approximately 60,000 (200 per day) and fares of \$2.00 for annual revenue of \$120,000.
- Annual operating cost of approximately \$400,000.
- Net Municipal cost of \$280,000.
- The County could qualify for up to approximately \$100,000 in Provincial gas tax funding for transit which would potentially reduce the annual municipal cost, in the above example, excluding the existing investment in the specialized transit service, to \$180,000.

It is to be noted that the foregoing costs are preliminary and do not include administrative, management or capital costs. A separate detailed transit study would be required to assess the feasibility of introducing a transit service and to confirm the full scope of costs involved. This level of investigation was beyond the scope of this current study.

County of Brant
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Exhibit 4-1: Summary of Peer Transit Systems

	Niagara on the Lake, ON	Brockville	Cobourg	Collingwood	Elliot Lake	Fort Erie	Huntsville	Kenora	Leamington	Orangeville	Port Hope	Wasaga Beach	Port Colborne	Average
Year Commenced		1982	1976	1982	1984	1979	1991	1984	1985	1991	1969	2008	1999	
Municipal Population	15,000	19,128	18,200	17,290	12,000	29,925	18,280	13,414	28,833	28,209	16,390	16,700	18,600	19,747
Population Served		19,128	10,602	15,000	12,000	21,200	10,000	6,700	20,000	28,200	13,750	16,700	18,600	15,990
Area Served		20.3	13	18.6	16	168	12	16	9.8	14	13.1	59.7	40.5	
Service Area Description														
Method of Operation		Direct	Contract	Contract	Contract	Contract	Contract	Contract	Contract	Contract	Contract	Contract	Contract	Contract
History of Service														
Type of Service		Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route
Offer Parallel / Accessible Transit		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Number of Routes		3	2	3	4	1	2	2	1	3	2	2	3	
Fleet Size		4	5	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	-
Peak Vehicles		3	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	3	2	2	2	
Fleet Description														
Span of Service														
Weekday		6:45-18:15	6:15-19:45	6:30-21:00	7:00-18:30 (M-W)	7:30-19:35	7:50-19:15	7:00-19:00	9:00-17:00	7:15-18:15	6:00-22:00	7:00-19:00	8:00-17:00	
Saturday		8:45-18:15	8:15-19:45	7:00-18:00	7:00-18:30	7:30-19:35	9:50-18:50	9:00-19:00	9:00-17:00	8:45-17:45	8:00-17:00	7:00-19:00	No service	
Sunday/Holiday		No service	9:00-16:00 (Sun)	9:00-17:00 (Sun)	No service	No service	No service	No service	No service	No service	No service	7:00-19:00	No service	
		11.5	13.5	14.5	11.5	12	11.5	12	8	12	16	12	9	
Service Frequency (min)														
Peak		60	60	30	60	60	120	90	60	30	60	60	60	60
Midday		60	60	60	60	60	120	120	no service at noon	30	60	60	no service at noon	
Evening		0	0	0	60 (Th-F)	0	0	0	0	30	60	0	0	
Saturday		60	60	30	60	60	120	60-120	60	60	60	60	0	
Sunday/Holiday		0	60	30 / 60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	0	
Revenue Kilometres		187,972	218,910	217,240	173,218	220,584	83,800	62,914	58,800	227,600	179,763	181,994	43,000	154,650
Revenue Hours		10,113	8,781	10,245	7,647	6,969	4,673	3,189	2,149	9,516	8,973	8,756	2,000	6,918
Total Vehicle Hours		10,653	8,781	10,470	7,767	7,519	4,673	3,189	2,515	9,516	8,973	8,756	3,250	7,172
Ridership		95,780	77,014	110,877	137,958	47,690	57,172	15,300	99,779	55,008	25,671	21,715	67,633	
Direct Operating Cost		\$540,667	\$486,503	\$598,931	\$418,924	\$429,215	\$203,155	\$211,634	\$161,838	\$475,890	\$514,720	\$348,559	\$132,595	\$376,886
Total Operating Cost		\$540,667	\$528,289	\$598,931	\$460,924	\$429,215	\$203,155	\$211,634	\$161,838	\$475,890	\$543,948	\$348,559	\$222,209	\$393,772
Passenger Revenue		\$155,243	\$134,653	\$101,935	\$238,499		\$23,306	\$96,945	\$17,406	\$135,931	\$78,588	\$39,633	\$36,098	\$96,203
Operating Revenue		\$166,487	\$139,403	\$101,935	\$243,369		\$23,306	\$96,945	\$37,041	\$163,504	\$78,588	\$39,633	\$36,098	\$102,392
Total Revenue		\$166,487	\$139,403	\$101,935	\$243,369		\$23,306	\$96,945	\$37,041	\$163,504	\$78,588	\$39,633	\$48,322	\$103,503
Net Direct Operating Cost		\$374,180	\$347,100	\$496,996	\$175,555		\$179,849	\$114,689	\$124,797	\$312,386	\$436,132	\$308,926	\$96,497	\$269,737
Net Operating Cost		\$374,180	\$388,886	\$496,996	\$217,555	\$429,215	\$179,849	\$114,689	\$124,797	\$312,386	\$465,360	\$308,926	\$173,887	\$298,894
Gas Tax		\$160,000		\$162,974	\$37,919	\$110,620	\$70,544		\$50,344	\$151,000	\$53,262		\$96,302	\$99,218
Municipal Cost		\$214,180	\$388,886	\$334,022	\$179,636	\$296,686	\$109,305	\$114,689	\$74,453	\$161,386	\$412,098	\$308,926	\$77,585	\$222,654
Revenue Hours per Capita		0.53	0.83	0.68	0.64	0.33	0.47	0.11	0.34	0.65	0.52	0.52	0.11	0.47
Riders per Capita		5.01	7.26	7.39	11.50	2.25	8.53	0.77	3.54	4.00	1.54	1.17	4.81	
Rides per Rev. Vehicle Hour		8.99	8.77	10.59	17.76	6.34	17.93	10.49	6.13	2.93	6.68	6.68	9.34	
Cost per Rev. Vehicle Hour		\$50.75	\$55.40	\$57.20	\$53.94	\$57.08	\$43.47	\$66.36	\$64.35	\$50.01	\$57.36	\$39.81	\$40.80	\$53.05
Cost per Passenger		\$5.64	\$6.32	\$5.40	\$3.04	\$9.00		\$3.70	\$10.58	\$4.77	\$9.36	\$13.58	\$6.11	\$5.57
Net Cost per Passenger		\$3.91	\$4.51	\$4.48	\$1.27			\$2.01	\$8.16	\$3.13	\$7.93	\$12.03	\$4.44	\$3.99
Net Cost per Capita		\$19.56	\$32.74	\$33.13	\$14.63		\$17.98	\$17.12	\$6.24	\$11.08	\$31.72	\$18.50	\$5.19	\$16.87
Average Fare		\$1.62	\$1.75	\$0.92	\$1.73			\$1.70	\$1.14	\$1.36	\$1.43	\$1.54	\$1.66	\$1.48
Average Speed		18.59	24.93	21.20	22.65	31.65	17.93	19.73	27.36	23.92	20.03	20.79	21.50	22.52
Revenue/Cost Ratio		31%	26%	17%	53%		11%	46%	23%	34%	14%	11%	16%	26%
Cash		\$2.00	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$2.00 adult; \$1.75 student, seniors	\$2.00	\$2 adult, senior; \$1 student; \$0.50 preschooler	\$2.00	\$2 adult; \$1.75 senior; \$1 student, child	\$2 adult; \$1.50 student, senior	\$2 adult; \$1.50 student, senior	\$2 adult; \$1.50 student, senior, child	\$2.00	
Tickets		\$1.50	\$1.60	\$0.90	\$1.82 adult, seniors; \$0.91 student			\$1.80	\$1.36 adult	\$1.70 adult; \$1.30 student, senior		\$1.50 adult; \$1.00 student, senior, child	\$1.91 adult; \$1.50 student, senior	
Monthly Pass		\$55	\$60 adult; \$50 students, seniors; \$25 child	\$30	\$55 adult; \$45 student, senior		\$50 adult, senior; \$25 student		\$35 adult; \$25 student, senior	\$50 adult; \$30 student, senior		\$69 adult; \$59 student; \$52 senior		
Others		Children < 6 Free	\$15.00 - school student after 6pm + weekends		Children < 3 Free			Children < 12 Free if riding with adult	Children < 6 Free	Children < 4 Free		Children < 12 Free if riding with adult		

5. TRANSIT SERVICE IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

This section outlines a range of public transit service options that could be considered by the County as well as a review of available provincial funding for transit and impact of the recently adopted provincial legislation on accessibility, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) on a public transit service supported by the County.

5.1 Transit Service Types

Public transit services encompass a wide range of types and service delivery strategies but essentially fall into two basic categories: conventional, and specialized. These are discussed below.

Conventional Transit – this service is designed to meet the broad needs of the general public and is the common service found in most municipalities such as Brantford, Hamilton, Waterloo, etc. It can consist of fixed routes as well as demand-response (ie. dial-a-bus) and other service types as warranted by the size of the community, the area served and population.

Specialized Transit – this service is designed specifically to meet the needs of people with disabilities and, where applicable, those who are unable to use the conventional transit service. Vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts and securement devices. The driver's provide assistance in boarding or alighting unless the user has an attendant. The service is operated on a "demand" basis, that is, users must arrange for a pick-up in advance. This is the type of service now provided by the County through a contract with Paris Transportation.

Most small municipalities operate separate conventional and specialized transit services although the smallest municipalities may operate a combined conventional and specialized transit service.

Transit Operations

Either of the foregoing services can be operated directly by the municipality with municipal employees or by private companies or non-profit agencies (typically for specialized transit) under a contract with the municipality. Under the latter approach, the terms and conditions would be defined in a formal contract between the operator and the municipality. The selection of an operator would typically be determined through the municipal procurement process.

Service Alternatives

For the **conventional transit** service, there are several approaches to providing transit service that can be considered as described below:

- *Fixed route*: this is the most common form of



Small Bus



Dial-A-Ride Van

public transit service consisting of defined routes and schedules. It can include not only local, frequent-stop service but express and commuter services as well.

Comment – This service can be operated with vans or small, medium or large buses. The frequency of service can vary by time of day and day of the week and can apply in all but very low density, dispersed population areas.

- *Demand-response (dial-a-bus)*: Also called “Dial-a-Ride”, this service essentially operates according to the demand for the service with no fixed route. Vehicles would be available to pick up or drop off transit users as the demand warrants. Customers would book trips by calling a minimum of 30 minutes in advance of their travel time. If there are no “customers”, the vehicle would not operate but would remain at a central point thereby conserving fuel. Vans or small buses can be used.

Comment: Multiple users would be picked up and dropped off during one trip. Service would be curb-to-curb, not door-to-door. This differentiates the service from a taxi.

- *Subsidized Shared-Ride Taxi or “TransCab”*: Under this concept, a taxi firm would be contracted to provide a service at a reduced or set fare, paid by the user, for pre-approved trips and individuals within a specified service area or along a specified route. The municipality would compensate the taxi firm for the difference in the set fare and actual trip cost based on the terms of the contract. This service concept is typically utilized to meet transportation needs in low demand areas or to offer service to elderly or disabled individuals.

Comment – To control usage and costs, a formalized contract would be established with a specific taxi operator incorporating a set fare, or fares, and rate of compensation to the taxi company. Costs would be controlled by restricting service eligibility or the type of trips covered by the arrangement although this would considerably limit the usefulness of the service and ridership.

- *Vanpool*: An arrangement in which a group of passengers share the use and cost of a van in travelling to and from pre-arranged destinations together. The van is assigned owned by one person. The passengers contribute to its cost of operation.

Comment - Typically, the municipality or relevant local agency provides the means to coordinate travel plans and to link the users using a central telephone information line and other information sources.

Specialized Transit services are operated on a demand-response basis only as noted previously in view of the specific needs of the clientele.

As indicated in the peer review, all of the example transit systems use a fixed route structure for their conventional transit system while the demand response approach is used for their specialized transit service because of the lower travel demand and the needs of users associated with the service.

5.2 Infrastructure – Stops, Shelters

As had been the case with the previous service provided under contract by Brantford Transit up to 1996, for a fixed route system, the County will need to install bus stops at regular intervals (typically every 200-250 metres) and install shelters as demand warrants. The cost to design and install a bus stop sign is approximately \$150 to \$200. As a guideline, for a single-route system, there could be approximately 50 to 60 bus stop signs for a potential capital cost of \$12,000. However, as

noted under the AODA discussion below, each stop would need to be accessible and this could increase the cost per bus stop to \$1,500 or more depending on the site conditions (existence of curbs, sidewalks) at each stop.

Shelters can cost between \$5,000 and \$7,000. There are several companies, such as Creative Outdoor and Pattison, who provide shelters with advertising in return for a long term (usually 10 year) contract and the rights to sell advertising. The contractor cleans and maintains their shelters. The number of shelters and financial terms are highly dependent on the “market reach” (attractiveness for advertising sales) of the community. Some small municipalities (ie. Fort Erie) have 6 shelters and receive \$100 to \$120 per year in revenue while others, such as Brockville, have only a few with no revenue. Unfortunately, with shelter advertising contracts, the contractor generally wishes to place shelters where exposure is highest for advertising purposes and often these locations do not coincide with desirable locations from a transit user standpoint.

The only practical way to determine the revenue potential from shelter advertising would be to issue a request for proposal (RFP). However, since any contract would be long term, typically 10 years, there would need to be a presumption of a long term commitment to a transit service by the municipality.

5.3 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

This legislation requires that all public services be accessible to persons with both visible and non-visible disabilities. When considering the implementation of a formal public transit service, under the AODA the County would be required to provide a service that is **fully** accessible, both in terms of the ability of vehicles and infrastructure (stops, shelters, terminals) to accommodate people with mobility restrictions and who use mobility devices, as well as one that meets the needs of those with significant disabilities in addition to the specialized service currently operated. These requirements are reinforced by the Ontario Human Rights Commission which, under recent amendments by the provincial government, can now initiate investigations and impose decisions without receiving a complaint from an individual.

Accessibility standards under the AODA are being prepared by the Province with input from stakeholders including municipal transit industry representatives for all areas covered by the Act. These standards will set forth the level and method for achieving the accessibility objectives of the AODA. Examples of areas of compliance include:

- Policies and Procedures. Must be developed in support of AODA standards;
- Vehicles. Must be accessible and include features for people with sight and hearing impairments;
- Bus stops and shelters (and other transit infrastructure). Must be accessible. For example, bus stops would have to have a hard, flat surface with an access ramp from surrounding roadways and sidewalks. Stops would have to be kept clear of ice and snow;
- Employee training. All persons involved in providing the transit service must receive sensitivity training;
- Stop announcements. All bus stops along a route must be announced on board. This can be handled by requiring drivers to announce the stops or by installing GPS-based automated stop announcement systems. Additionally, pre-boarding announcements,

such as when a bus arrives at a stop, must be given to advise the boarding passenger where the bus is heading;

- Signage. Buses and stops must have suitable route destination information;
- information and customer service. Information must be available in a variety of formats; and
- Planning, Consultation and Reporting. The municipality must report on its compliance to the accessibility standards and performance measures annually.

Municipalities and transit agencies must meet the customer service standard by 2012. Compliance with the remaining standards are to be phased in over a three to ten year period. The requirement to announce bus stops has been advocated by the Ontario Human Rights Commission and municipalities are now required to meet this standard.

In summary, having transit services that are “accessible” means more than just having vehicles that are accessible.

5.4 Provincial Funding

If Brant County decided to adopt a public transit service, it would become eligible to receive funding from the province through the provincial gas tax allocation. The gas tax payment is based on a formula of 70% transit ridership and 30% population and is distributed quarterly to each municipality operating a municipal transit service. The program has a funding cap of 75% on what is known as “municipal own account spending”, that is, the total of what the municipality financially contributes towards transit plus the fare revenues and any local donations. Based on preliminary discussions with provincial staff, Brant County could qualify for up to \$100,000 depending on the amount of the County’s annual investment in transit. The gas tax would be payable in the first quarter following implementation of a service. The gas tax can be used for transit operations, purchase of vehicles and infrastructure (bus stops, shelters) as well as for marketing and communications activities associated with promoting transit use. However, eligibility for gas tax will depend on the type of transit service introduced. **A demonstration or trial service would not qualify for funding nor would a subsidized taxi service.**

Another source of potential local funding for transit could be Development Charges (DCs). Depending on the situation in the County and the guidelines adopted by the County, DC’s could be applied against the cost of transit operations and purchase of vehicles provided it could be demonstrated that the service was being provided as the result of growth.

The *provincial* gas tax funding for transit should not be confused with the *federal* gas funding that the County receives through the federal-provincial agreement. These funds can be used for general infrastructure and transportation projects at the discretion of the municipality.

5.5 Formal Transit Study

Should the municipality wish to consider the introduction of a conventional transit service, then a full transit feasibility study should be undertaken as noted earlier. Said study would confirm needs, transit service options, service design (routes, days and hours of service), method of operation (direct or contracted), capital requirements (vehicles, infrastructure), fares and required administrative and support costs and would cost in the order of \$40,000 to \$50,000.

6. TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT PLAN - RECOMMENDED APPROACH

On the basis of the comments received through the stakeholder consultation, the transportation needs identified in the 2008 TMP, discussions with the taxi operators, consideration of the potential financial cost and legislative impact of introducing a formal public transit service, and consideration of the County's taxi By-law, the recommended approach at this time for reducing auto use and increasing the use of existing alternative transportation services within Paris and between Paris and Brantford would be to work with the taxi operators to promote their services as the "public transit" service for the community. The taxi operators, supported by the flexibility available under the County's taxi By-law, currently offer several services which are intended to meet the needs of area residents. However, it was clearly evident through the stakeholder consultation that there was limited awareness of these services. As such, a joint effort between the County and the taxi operators should be undertaken to promote the taxi services.

However, in order to do this, there would need to be an agreement on some key principles as follows:

1. A commitment to provide a "transit service" to the Paris community (residents, workers, students) for a minimum period of time, 12 months;
2. A commitment to stabilize fares and not under-cut each other's service. This latter commitment is important in order to provide stability and certainty of services to residents.

On the basis that buy-in can be achieved, a minimum trial period of 12 months for the "transit service" would be designated and supported by a marketing and promotion strategy and materials developed by the County in collaboration with the taxi operators, with the assistance of IBI Group. Monitoring and assessment of the trial service would be undertaken monthly with a formal report summarizing the status of the service prepared every three months for review by County staff. At six month intervals, the information report together with any recommended supplementary actions would be submitted to Council. Essentially, the "transit service" would be assessed in terms of use ("ridership"), costs and revenues so that a determination of its success in meeting the needs of residents can be made and for identifying any needed improvements.

In this regard, discussions were held with the two taxi operators and consensus was achieved in the following areas:

1. Service would consist of a shuttle service within Paris along the Grand River Road as well as a link service to Brantford to the downtown Brantford Transit terminal. Service would be available, on a demand basis, 6 days per week and between approximately 6 am and 10 pm;
2. Agreement to a common set fare for seniors of \$4.50 per trip. Would apply to persons over age 60. Special tickets would be made available by both companies for pre-purchase by seniors and use on either of the two taxi services. The taxi companies would design and print the tickets. These tickets would be made available through County offices and potentially local businesses and the Chamber;
3. Agreement to joint promotion with the County. The County would prepare marketing/promotion materials in collaboration with the Taxi operators. Promotion would include printing of posters for posting at various venues and destinations around Paris, advertisements in the local media (newspaper and radio), information on the County website and "take-away" flyers also available at the taxi and County offices;

4. Agreement to a periodic review and assessment of the success of a continuing role for taxis as the “public transit” service in the Paris community;
5. Taxi operators will provide a monthly summary of daily trips provided.
6. The County would set up a telephone number and email address to receive feedback from the public on the service.

The estimated expense for the County to promote the taxi services as outlined in item 3 above, would be approximately \$15,000 including printing and media ads.

The concept of a “central” or single telephone number for booking trips, so as to simplify and increase recognition of the available taxi service, was discussed but felt to be difficult administratively and unnecessary.

The “success” of the continued use of taxis will be based on any identifiable increased use of the taxis compared to the period before the joint promotion begins. A suitable date for commencing the promotion would have to be selected subject to Council budget approval.

6.1 County Administration for Transit Services

During the course of the study, the question of responsibility and administration for the public transit portfolio within the County corporate structure was identified. Currently, responsibility lies within several County departments, namely Development Services, Community Services, Corporate Services and Public Works. Issues such as administration of the specialized service contract, reviewing and reconciling invoices and general planning and responses to information requests related to public transit are splintered. This situation has evolved as a result of organizational and staffing changes over a number of years. Divided responsibilities negatively impact the effective oversight of any service including the planning and management of the service.

Issues related to public transit such as parking (policies, supply and pricing) and the development and administration of the taxi by-law, which, as noted in the course of this study, has a significant impact on the potential to establish a formal public transit service within the County, should each be brought together within a single department and a responsible individual designated for accountability and responsibility reasons. The most appropriate department, in view of its mandate, would appear to be Public Works but this would be a Council decision. The over-riding consideration is that the delivery of transit services should be consolidated under one department.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

To promote and increase public transit use within the Paris community and between Paris and the City of Brantford, it is recommended that the County of Brant:

1. Work with the two local taxi operators to implement the recommended transit service improvement plan outlined in section 5 above for a minimum trial period of 12 months or such period of time as is agreed to with the taxi operators;
2. Implement joint promotion with the taxi companies of the taxi services including the introduction of a common fare for seniors including tickets at \$4.50 per trip, and marketing and customer information materials at a maximum cost to the County of \$15,000 in 2012, subject to Council budget approval;
3. Undertake a review with the taxi operators at six month intervals of the impact of the promotional activities to specifically quantify increases in the use of the taxis over the period of the trial period;
4. Implement the trial promotion subject to Council budget approval;
5. Undertake a "satisfaction review" of the taxi promotion six months after commencement of the trial period consisting of a meeting with stakeholders either through focus groups and/or a public open house to measure the level of awareness of the taxi services, level of use and degree of satisfaction towards meeting the needs of residents and businesses and identifying required further action to reduce automobile use and increase the use of "public transit"; and
6. Consolidate the responsibilities associated with transit including the specialized transit service, parking and taxis within one department and the responsibility for the functions be assigned to one individual. The department that should be responsible for transit services can be determined as part of a corporate organizational review study.

APPENDIX A

2008 COUNTY TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN – SECTION RE TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

APPENDIX B

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT FUNDING APPLICATION TO PROVINCE
