

# Information Report

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Service Area	Public Services
Date	Friday, October 30, 2020
Subject	<b>Guelph Transit Microtransit Service Delivery Model</b>

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## Executive Summary

### Purpose of Report

To provide Council with options for alternative service delivery models for low volume and/or new or under serviced areas where quick transit accessibility can be implemented with microtransit.

### Key Findings

Guelph Transit now has the ability to look at options to reduce operating costs by implementing a newly developed microtransit service model based on recently purchased software (RideCo) to allow low volume or new service areas to easily connect to our current Guelph Transit Route network.

Microtransit can be described as “flexible transit.” Microtransit fits somewhere between private individual transportation, such as taxis, rideshare platform, and conventional public transit on a fixed route. Microtransit will allow Guelph Transit to offer riders an on-demand option that is more flexible than the conventional or specialized transit models currently available in the city of Guelph.

An easy way to think about microtransit would be to visualize using an application (app), website or a call centre to book a trip. This would be much like you would if you were using one of the currently available rideshare platforms; however instead, you would be picked up in a Guelph Transit vehicle. Using the Guelph Transit app or online booking tool, customers can request a pickup anywhere within a given service area using either a virtual stop or an existing designated traditional bus stop. Guelph Transit may dispatch a conventional, specialized or dedicated microtransit vehicle to the location allowing Guelph Transit to maximize the use of its fleet. This will also reduce road congestion in some areas.

As the City of Guelph navigates the future, microtransit will become more mainstream, especially in some areas that do not need dedicated fixed route service. This benefits transit riders as it provides flexibility to allow them to manage their own transportation when needed.

### Benefits of Microtransit:

1. Increase ridership: When microtransit is introduced as an option, citizens that may not have utilized conventional transit may take advantage of the flexibility of microtransit, leading to potential net new riders on the Guelph Transit network.

2. Increasing service area: Microtransit would give Guelph Transit the ability to reach service areas that conventional routes may not service such as the Hanlon Creek Business Park (HCBP) or expanded industrial areas without having a dedicated service.
3. Flexible: Microtransit accommodates riders whose schedule may not fit into fixed route timing.
4. Efficient: When pick up and drop off locations can be shared to common locations, travel times and kilometers driven are reduced.
5. Cost-effective: When microtransit is used in underperforming, low volume, off peak, or holiday service, operational costs are reduced as vehicles are not constantly driving around the city.

Transit vehicles can now be dispatched on short notice because Guelph Transit has the tools to conduct microtransit. Public transit is evolving rapidly, and microtransit can offer more efficient and flexible service to all citizens of the city of Guelph.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications to this report, as it is for information purposes only to demonstrate the differences in cost for Route 19 under a conventional transit model and a microtransit model.

Should Council wish to pursue the option of offering microtransit to address service into the Hanlon Creek Business Park, it would need to be brought forward as part of the 2021 budget deliberation process.

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## **Report**

### **Details**

Guelph Transit could implement the microtransit strategy with Route 19 (Hanlon Creek Business Park).

With the launch of a user friendly app, online, or phone call, customers will have the ability to book a first mile or last mile trip into the new Hanlon Creek Business Park. Customers will be picked up at the Clair and Gordon bus stop, conveniently located where the Route 99 arrives every 15 minutes.

Once booked, customers will have the ability to receive text messages when the driver is en route and also when the vehicle has arrived to the pickup location. Customers will also have the ability to track the vehicle via the app or online tool and will show location in real time.

On the operator side, the software has built in driver navigation, particularly helpful for onboarding new operators and also ensuring the shortest distance between pickups and drop-offs are achieved, reducing operational costs.

It is anticipated that when launched, Route 19 customers can expect wait times between 5 and 15 minutes, with a pick up window of approximately 10 minutes or less. Average duration of trips would be less than 10 minutes to a designated bus stop. Virtual bus stops can be identified and easily changed to accommodate 95% of residents to less than a 6 minute walk. Customers will be connected to the most frequent route in the Guelph Transit network to allow easy access to other parts of

the city. Projected performance levels of a microtransit model for Route 19 is as follows:

Microtransit Model	Projected Performance
Projected Ridership – Net New	20 to 50 rides per day based on Guelph Transit internal planning studies
Wait Times – Estimated Average	5 to 15 minutes for On-Demand trips, with a pick up window of 10 minutes or less
On Board Duration – Estimated Average	Less than 10 minutes, with some direct trips of 6 minutes or less
Accessibility	Walking distance to all virtual stops will be placed within a 6 minute walk or less to a projected 95% of residents and business
Service Model	First mile last mile connection to the Guelph Transit Bus network. All microtransit trips will start at Gordon and Clair, to easily connect to the most frequent route available (Route 99, currently every 15 minutes). When a return trip is needed customers will be dropped off at Gordon and Clair to take advantage of Route 99’s frequent service.

Route 19 was approved for expansion at the November 4, 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting in the [Allocation of new Buses](#) with an expected implementation of September 2020, and approved as part of the 2020 operating budget at a cost of \$910,414 annually. Due to COVID-19, this expansion has been deferred as part of cost mitigation measures. A revised implementation for Route 19 has not been determined as COVID-19 continues to affect Transit business operations. With the implementation of a microtransit model for Route 19, it is estimated that Guelph Transit could operate the Route 19 service for \$219,210 less annually compared to the cost of operating conventional service for this route.

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### **Consultations**

Finance

Business Service

## **Strategic Plan Alignment**

This program will not only foster easy, accessible movement within the city of Guelph, it will provide attractive, affordable and reasonable transportation options for everyone. It will also improve connections to workplaces in Guelph that are not currently serviced and improve the safety, efficiency and connectivity of the whole transportation network to allow residents to easily navigate the future.

## **Attachments**

None

## **Departmental Approval**

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