

Information Report



Service Area	Public Services
Date	Friday, October 1, 2021
Subject	Guelph Transit Microtransit Service Delivery Model Update

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To provide Council with a four month update on alternative transit service delivery models for low volume and/or new or underserved areas where quick transit accessibility can be implemented with microtransit options.

Key Findings

Guelph Transit looked at options to reduce its operating costs by implementing a newly developed microtransit service model using existing operational efficiencies 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 platforms, and conventional public transit on a fixed route. Microtransit allows 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 using one of the currently available rideshare platforms; however, instead of conventional or mobility service options, you would be picked up in a Guelph Transit on-demand vehicle. Using the On-demand your way 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 better maximize the use of its fleet. This also assists in reducing overall road congestion in some areas of the city.

Financial Implications

As a result of less kilometres driven, it is estimated there’s an overall savings in fuel and maintenance of \$162,676 by the end of the year.

Report

Details

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 and choices to allow them to manage their own transportation when needed.

Benefits of microtransit:

1. Increase in ridership: When microtransit is introduced as an option, residents that have used conventional transit otherwise may take advantage of the flexibility of microtransit, leading to potential new riders on the Guelph Transit network.
2. Increasing service area coverage: Microtransit gives 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.
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.

Guelph Transit can now dispatch vehicles on short notice due to operational efficiencies. Public transit is evolving rapidly, and microtransit can offer more efficient and flexible service to all Guelph residents. Guelph Transit implemented microtransit service delivery models on May 2, 2021, launching two services: Community on-demand and Hanlon on-demand (i.e. Hanlon Industrial first mile last mile service).

Guelph Transit also launched a user-friendly app, online web portal, and a dedicated call in number for both services. Once booked, customers 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 can also track in real time the Guelph Transit vehicle for their desired trip.

Community on-demand

Community on-demand covers a 30-square-kilometre area of the city, offering service between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday to Saturday.

Since May 2, 2021, about 1,200 rides have been provided. During that time, Guelph Transit drove 5,515 kilometres, a reduction from the previous community bus service of 22,491 kilometres. This amounts to a four month estimated savings in fuel and maintenance of \$18,673, with an overall savings by the end of year of \$37,347. As an added bonus, we will be reducing the City's carbon footprint by diverting an estimated 24,000 kilograms of CO₂ equivalent from the air by the end of the year.

Customer feedback has been positive with an average ride rating of 4.5 stars out of five. Most of the feedback heard is to extend the hours of service and the overall service coverage area.

Hanlon on-demand

Hanlon on-demand (i.e. Hanlon Industrial first mile last mile), covers an eight-square-kilometre area of the city that provides service to both industrial business parks as well as some south end residential areas. Hours of service are the same as regular conventional service from 5:45 a.m. to 12:15 a.m. Monday to Saturday, and 9:15 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. Sundays. Since May 2, 2021, about 13,100 rides have been provided and during that time Guelph Transit drove 24,362 kilometres, a reduction when comparing 69,771 kilometres for conventional service. This amounts to a four month estimated savings in fuel and maintenance of \$62,664, with an overall savings by the end of year expected to be about \$125,328. As an added bonus, we will be reducing the City's carbon footprint by diverting an estimated 208,000 kilograms of CO2 equivalent from the air by the end of the year.

And with pre-COVID-19 Route 99 service back to every ten minute frequency effective September 5, 2021, this has provided customers more flexibility and choices when planning trips in and out of the Hanlon Business Park and Hanlon Creek Business Park.

Next Steps

When the Transit Route Review recommendations are presented to Council this fall along with other recommendations, Guelph Transit will focus on delivering a set of service standards for transit operations. These standards will provide Guelph Transit with targets for implementing on-demand or microtransit options. They would also provide guidelines when converting microtransit options to a conventional base route.

Financial Implications

As a result of less kilometres driven, it is estimated there will be an overall savings in fuel and maintenance of \$162,676 by the end of the year.

Consultations

Finance

Fleet Services

Corporate Energy

Strategic Plan Alignment

Microtransit fosters easy, accessible movement within the city of Guelph, and it provides convenient, affordable, and reasonable transportation options for everyone. It also improves connections to workplaces in Guelph that are not currently serviced and improves the safety, efficiency, and connectivity of the whole transportation network allowing residents to easily navigate the future.

Departmental Approval

None

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