



Staff Report

Community Services

Report To: Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date: November 5, 2018
Report Number: CSPW.18.080
Subject: Transit Pilot Project Three Month Service Update
Prepared by: Ryan Gibbons, Acting Director of Community Services

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CSPW.18.080, entitled “Transit Pilot Project Three Month Service Update” for information purposes.

B. Overview

This report provides a service update on the Transit Pilot Project collaboration between the Town of Collingwood, the Town of Wasaga Beach and the Town of The Blue Mountains.

C. Background

In early 2018, as part of the recommendations from the Labour Supply Task Force, individuals representing public and private organizations within Southern Georgian Bay, began active efforts to analyze and determine the local transportation needs through the development of a Regional Transportation Task Force.

The goal of the Task Force is to look at transportation on a large scale while increasing cooperation and regional contribution. Their mission is to:

Analyze, Plan and Advance regional efforts to improve public and workforce transportation needs.

The development of this Task Force is positive. Representation from a wide variety of disciplines provides an immense information network unlike anything seen in the development of transit services previously in the area. The three 2018 pilot projects identified are as follows:

1. Improving access to public transportation with extended hours of service that better meet employer shift needs
2. A private sector ‘ride sharing’ employee shuttle/transit that would operate solely for employment purposes, meeting specific requirements of individual businesses
3. A regional digital map of regional transportation options for employers to share with summer employees

The first project the group found as immediate need was to fill the service gaps in the existing service schedules to provide consistent transit service across municipalities. The transit task force approached all three Municipal Councils and recommended a nine month trial to extend service throughout the areas in the existing schedule to aid in assisting transportation needs mainly for the workforce within the Southern Georgian Bay region. As part of the approvals from each of the Municipal Councils, the Transportation Task Force would provide updates on the performance of the extension of service throughout the trial period.

D. Analysis

This Staff Report will serve as the first update to Council on the status of the performance of the trial in the first three months, as well as the status of the additional projects the task force has identified as a priority.

Project 1: Extension of Hours

The following table illustrates the gaps within the different systems which existed prior to the extension of service. Areas highlighted in yellow show are the areas of service which were added during the trail service period.

	MONDAY-FRIDAY														
	6:00-7:00	7:00-8:00	8:00-9:00	9:00-10:00	10:00-11:00	11:00-12:00	12:00-1:00	1:00-2:00	2:00-3:00	3:00-4:00	4:00-5:00	5:00-6:00	6:00-7:00	7:00-8:00	8:00-9:00
Colltrans	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Wasaga Tranist	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Wasaga Beach Link	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Blue Mountain Link	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
	SATURDAY														
	6:00-7:00	7:00-8:00	8:00-9:00	9:00-10:00	10:00-11:00	11:00-12:00	12:00-1:00	1:00-2:00	2:00-3:00	3:00-4:00	4:00-5:00	5:00-6:00	6:00-7:00	7:00-8:00	8:00-9:00
Colltrans	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Wasaga Tranist	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Wasaga Beach Link	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Blue Mountain Link	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
	SUNDAY														
	6:00-7:00	7:00-8:00	8:00-9:00	9:00-10:00	10:00-11:00	11:00-12:00	12:00-1:00	1:00-2:00	2:00-3:00	3:00-4:00	4:00-5:00	5:00-6:00	6:00-7:00	7:00-8:00	8:00-9:00
Colltrans	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Wasaga Tranist	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Wasaga Beach Link	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Blue Mountain Link	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow

The first three months of service have showed a significant increase among the Blue Mountains Link, and slight increases on the other systems. The following table illustrates an overview of the monthly ridership trends among all systems over the past four to five years including a percent increase or decrease compared to the previous year.

Colltrans								
Month	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% +/-
Jul	11221	12060	11448	11610	11003	10329	10197	-1.3
Aug	11806	11939	10882	9953	9885	10025	9587	-4.3
Sep	11567	11711	11352	9948	9936	10096	10996	+9.0

Wasaga Beach Link								
Month	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% +/-
Jul	2104	3407	4194	4541	4355	4562	4975	+9.0
Aug	2023	3266	4357	3935	4365	4740	5410	+14.1
Sep	2017	3198	5101	3902	4225	3430	5212	+52.0

Blue Mountains Link								
Month	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% +/-
Jul	No Data	No Data	1886	2255	2746	2039	3828	+87.7
Aug	No Data	No Data	1860	2162	2740	2348	3253	+38.5
Sep	No Data	No Data	1431	1652	1970	1983	2771	+39.7

The target goals for ridership during the trial period were:

- Collingwood 10%
- Collingwood/Wasaga Beach 15%
- Collingwood/Blue Mountains 50%

Overall, Colltrans ridership has decreased in the past 3 years, very much in line with ridership across the Province, but can also be attributed to passengers using the other Link buses in place of in Town routes. Currently, the extension of the weekend evening service on Colltrans only make up a total of 1.7% of the total monthly ridership, seeing no more of than five riders per hour between 6:00pm and 9:00pm on weekends. Although the new hours have not been performing substantially, September has seen the largest increase in four years at an increase of 9%, which is mainly attributed to the new international students attending Georgian College. The Collingwood Wasaga Beach Link bus has increased very closely to the projected 15%, and is anticipated to increase with the increased seasonal employment shift as winter approaches.

The Collingwood Blue Mountains Link has seen the largest increase of the three systems, and is on target for reaching the 50% ridership increase during the trial period.

The following is a breakdown of the Average Monthly Ridership during the extended periods of service for each of the systems:

- Colltrans Average Sunday Monthly Ridership in Extended Hour Period: 98 Riders
- Colltrans Average Saturday Monthly Ridership in Extended Hour Period: 68 Riders
- Blue Mountain Average Monthly Ridership in Extended Hours: 1255 Riders
- Wasaga Beach Link Average Monthly Ridership in Extended Hours: 224 Riders

On average, the three systems are seeing an increase of approximately 1600 riders per month total. The shoulder tourist and employment season (September to November) will likely see lower numbers, as is the typical trend for this route. However, campaigns are being planned to promote ridership during this period for the links as well as Colltrans, including collaborating with the high schools.

Project 2: Private Sector Ride Sharing

As an additional need to compliment public transit service, private sector businesses have been diligently working towards implementing a service that operates outside the transit operating hours to compliment the transit within the region. The Transit working group has aided in the coordination of efforts, however, the majority of the work has been done through the private sector to achieve the goal of a winter service to address this need. Currently, the private sector businesses are working to establish cost sharing measures and timetables to have this service established prior to the hiring of additional winter staff to aid in attracting new employees with additional transportation needs.

Project 3: Awareness of Public Transit/Digital Maps and Signage

Several baseline awareness action items have been completed, including:

- Creating a simple poster promoting the better bus hours and distributed digitally, as handouts and as laminated information bulletins for staff rooms
- Registering and publishing a dedicated regional URL and web-page with easy hyperlinks to the various regional transportation resources: www.SouthGeorgianBayTransit.ca
- Social media posts promoting the better bus hours by www.facebook.com/ExperienceCollingwood as well as Blue Mountain Village and other regional municipalities
- Updating large signs in bus shelters with new schedule and regional route map
- Promoting free bus service connected with key events, including Collingwood Elvis Festival and Apple Harvest Festival

Further promotional efforts are being planned:

- Updated transit map brochure
- Collaboration with high schools
- Continued social media support including new promotional videos

Overall, the performance of the trial service is encouraging. The anticipated targets are either very close to being met, or exceeding projections. With aid from the Regional Transit Task Force to promote awareness of the regional transit service, the hope is to strengthen the rider base and attract more user groups to use transit in the upcoming months.

E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Goal #1: Create Opportunities for Sustainability

Objective #1 Retain Existing Business

Objective #2 Attract New Business

Objective #3 Promote a Diversified Economy

Goal #2: Engage Our Communities & Partners

Objective #3 Strengthen Partnerships

Goal #3: Support Healthy Lifestyles

Objective #4 Commit to Sustainability

Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational & Operational Excellence

Objective #3 To Consistently Deliver Excellent Customer Service

Objective #4 To Be a Financially Responsible Organization

Objective #5 Constantly Identify Opportunities to Improve Efficiencies and Effectiveness

F. Environmental Impacts

Reducing the use of fossil fuels by promoting the use of local public transit systems.

G. Financial Impact

N/A

H. In consultation with

Town of Collingwood

Town of Wasaga Beach

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been subject to a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. Comments regarding this report should be submitted to Ryan Gibbons, Acting Director of Community Services at directorcs@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

None

Respectfully submitted,

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