



**Subject: T:GO Inter-Community Transit – Status Report**

**Report Number:** OPD 25-005

Department: Operations and Development Department

Submitted by: Landon Chan, GIS Technician/Transit Coordinator

Meeting Type: Council Meeting

Meeting Date: Monday, February 24, 2025

**RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT report OPD 25-005 titled “T:GO Inter-Community Transit – Status Report” be received as information; and
- B. THAT Council direct staff to develop a communication strategy to advise residents of the pending cessation of the program effective April 1, 2025; and
- C. THAT Council authorize the CAO and Director of Operations and Development to renew the In-Town service agreement with Voyago effective April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026.

**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to advise Council and the broader community of the pending cessation of the T:GO Inter-Community Transit program effective April 1, 2025.

Further, staff are seeking Council approval to renew the In-Town service agreement with Voyago effective April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026.

**DISCUSSION**

In 2020, the Town was awarded the Community Transit Grant to fund operational costs for Inter-Community Transit. The primary cost is the subcontract expense with Voyago, of which costs for the last 5 years have been as follows:

<b>5 Year Actuals</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020 (5-month pilot)</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	\$400,635	\$400,056	\$366,644	\$364,679	\$165,897

The Community Transit Grant was supposed to end in 2023 but was extended to 2025 due to COVID. Effective April 1, 2025, there will be a funding gap that needs to be addressed. In view of this, Town staff presented Oxford County with a revised service model to maintain services after the Community Transit Grant program concluded.

From August 2020 – December 2024, Route 1 (see attachment) has consistently seen the highest ridership. While this can be attributed to days of operation and the number of stops, Route 1 has always been our most successful run.

Day	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4
Mon	5 runs per day	-	-	2
Tue	5	3	3	-
Wed	5	-	-	2
Thu	5	-	-	-
Fri	5	3	3	-
<b>Ridership TO DATE</b>	<b>7526 riders</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>1467</b>

In an effort to extend the service, Tillsonburg staff proposed a revised service model consisting of 2 routes for the period of April 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025. The Northern Oxford Route was suggested in consultation with the Director of Public Works for Oxford County. The Southern Oxford Route was in consultation with the Vice President of Voyago and is based on Route 1.

The Northern Oxford Route was part of a 2020 County proposal that was unable to gain the buy-in of all lower-tier municipalities. Town staff thought that the addition of the Southern Oxford Route that has been tried and tested over the past 4 years could potentially gain the buy-in from our neighbouring lower-tiers. We proposed a County-wide levy to each lower-tier municipality, but with the potential legal challenge between Woodstock and Ingersoll versus Oxford County over transit, County was not comfortable moving forward at this time.

The estimated cost to run the refined program from April 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025 was approximately \$270,648.

- 3 buses @ 4 hours = 12 hours x 252 service days = 3024 total service hours

Municipality	Proportionate % Share (\$275,000.00)	Proportionate \$ Share (\$275,000.00)
Woodstock	34.0%	\$93,500.00
Tillsonburg	13.5%	\$37,125.00
Ingersoll	10.6%	\$29,150.00
Zorra	10.3%	\$28,325.00
Norwich	9.6%	\$26,400.00
East Zorra-Tavistock	7.7%	\$21,175.00
Blandford-Blenheim	7.7%	\$21,175.00
South-West Oxford	6.6%	\$18,150.00

Without a County-wide levy to each lower-tier municipality, T:GO Inter-Community Transit will have zero funding to pay for the service. The Ontario Transit Investment Fund is active, but unlike the Community Transit Grant program, individual municipalities cannot apply. Without the buy-in of our County neighbours, a successful program application is unviable. While there is uncertainty about the future of T:GO Inter-Community Transit, In-Town Transit will continue as long as we renew the service agreement with Voyago effective April 1, 2025 – March 31 2026 with their newly adjusted rates.

**CONSULTATION**

Internal: Chief Administrative Officer, Director of Operations/Development, Economic Development Project Coordinator, Public Works Coordinator.

External: Vice President of Voyago, Chief Administrative Officer (Oxford County), Director of Public Works (Oxford County), Manager of Transportation/Waste Management (Oxford County), Chief Administrative Officer (East Zorra-Tavistock), Public Transportation/Business Development Coordinator (Norfolk County).

**FINANCIAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>5 Year Actuals</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020 (5-month pilot)</b>
<b>CTG Funding</b>	\$447,411	\$404,420	\$390,063	\$416,883	\$277,144

With the pending cessation of the inter-community transit service March 31, 2025, and with a new funding parcel unknown, staff had reduced both the Revenue and Expenditures in the 2025 Operating Budget accordingly. Funding for the January – March 2025 portion of the service was the only amount included in the approved 2025 Operating Budget. The overall reduction to the Inter-Community Levy due to the reductions for the remainder of April 1 – December 31, 2025 amounts to a \$98,291 reduction, as shown in Appendix E.

Should opportunities arise for new funding, the approved 2025 Operating Budget will need to be amended accordingly. This would be brought back to Council for further direction. Should Council wish to revisit the Inter-Community Service and identify alternate funding sources, it would be in the magnitude of \$400,000+ but subject to validation through a new tender process.

**Future Consideration**

In the interim, Town staff have applied to the Rural Transit Solutions Fund – Planning & Design fund. This \$50,000 fund can be used for a study to develop right fit transit solutions (examples: options analysis, feasibility studies, or detailed costing estimates relating to the design of a transit solution. We are currently waiting to hear if we have been awarded the grant. We would most likely have to match the \$50,000 to afford a worthwhile study of the Northern Oxford Route and Southern Oxford Route. Any outcome will be brought back to Council for direction.

The following chart is the refined program cost overview. These estimates were provided from Voyago (excluding HST) based on modules that clocked the Northern Oxford Route and Southern Oxford Route at 2 hours per run.

	March 31, 2024 – March 31, 2025	April 1, 2025 (refined program)	Diff, \$	Diff, %
<b>Contracted Services</b>	\$411,000	\$270,648	\$140,352	-34.15%
<b>Total Service Hours</b>	4599	3024	1839	-34.25%
<b>CT Grant Contribution</b>	\$465,147 (forecasted value)	N/A		
<b>Contracted Rate</b>	\$89.50/Hr	\$89.50/Hr (subject to change)	-	
<b>Hours Available</b>	4599	3024	1839	-34.25%

**CORPORATE GOALS**

How does this report support the corporate goals identified in the Community Strategic Plan?

- Lifestyle and amenities
- Customer service, communication and engagement
- Business attraction, retention and expansion
- Community growth
- Connectivity and transportation
- Not Applicable

Does this report relate to a specific strategic direction or project identified in the Community Strategic Plan? Please indicate section number and/or any priority projects identified in the plan.

**Goal** – Connectivity and Transportation

**Strategic Direction** – Provide alternatives to automobile travel through active transportation and public transit.

**Priority Project** – Town participation in regional transit initiative.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. North\_South\_V3.1 (pdf)
- B. Northern Oxford Route\_V3.1 (pdf)
- C. Southern Oxford Route\_V3.1 (pdf)
- D. Route 1 Map - For Information (pdf)
- E. Transit Services, 2024 vs 2025 Budget