



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the General Committee

From: Ilmar Simanovskis, Commissioner Municipal Operations

Meeting Date: March 10, 2025

Report: Contract Extension for Selwyn Link Bus Service, Report MOTR25-002

Subject

A report to recommend that the City extend the contract with the Township of Selwyn for the provision of The Link Transit services pilot program, supported through the Community Transportation Grant program. This extension will be for an additional 12 months, expiring March 31, 2026.

Recommendation

That Council approve the recommendation outlined in Report MOTR25-002, dated March 10, 2025, of the Commissioner Municipal Operations as follows:

That Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute documents between the City and Selwyn Township for the continued operation of the pilot transit service within Selwyn Township for an additional twelve months, expiring March 31, 2026, on terms acceptable to the said Commissioner and in forms acceptable to the City Solicitor.

Background

Peterborough Transit has been the provider of “The Link”, Selwyn Township's pilot transit service since April 2021.

In 2017, the province introduced the “Community Transportation Grant Program”, to fund the development of community transportation solutions to address local transportation needs, including ways to utilize existing transportation resources more efficiently.

Currently, the program focuses on developing new services for Ontario communities not served by public transportation. Projects that are prioritized for funding include, improved mobility for seniors, people with disabilities, the youth, and low-income individuals.

The program also emphasizes partnerships, coordination, and a collaborative approach to the introduction and delivery of new or enhanced transit services. Emphasis is placed on intercommunity services and providing connections to existing municipal or intercity transit services or hubs. Selwyn Township, in partnership with Curve Lake First Nation, Community Care, and the City, applied to this program to develop a rural transit service.

Selwyn Township received funding in the amount of \$1,488,400 under the Community Transportation Grant program to support the establishment of the proposed rural transportation system and executed a Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) with the Province on July 30, 2019.

As part of the grant application, the City committed to supporting this initiative in several ways, including:

- Technical Support – To assist in the development of the operational and customer service policies and procedures, necessary to successfully operate a transit service and comply with all regulatory requirements.
- Joint Marketing - Working with Selwyn Township and Curve Lake First Nation to develop joint marketing and cross-promotion of the new services and provide joint ticket sales through the City’s customer service center at the downtown transit terminal.
- Route Integration – Designing the service to allow for transfers between the proposed service and the City system, at Trent University where riders can transfer onto the City bus routes; and
- Fare Integration - To provide a seamless service to customers, a fare integration agreement was proposed, which would allow customers to gain access to the entire City transit system through payment of one fare. A portion of which would provide for a new revenue stream from the Township to Peterborough Transit.

The Township recognized that they would need to contract this new service out, at least during the pilot period, as they did not have the internal resources or expertise to manage and deliver transit services. The Township's research found that close integration with the City of Peterborough as an operator of a mature transit system, was ideal and would contribute to the success of this service as has been seen on other communities with similar programs.

Selwyn Council expressed an interest in participating with the City and entering into a service contract for the delivery of this program during the pilot period. At their meeting on September 10, 2019, the Council of the Township of Selwyn approved the following staff recommendation:

"That the Township of Selwyn request the City of Peterborough to consider entering into a service contract with the Township of Selwyn for the provision of the transportation services pilot program which is being supported through the Community Transportation Grant funding."

Service Concept: Peterborough Transit operates the two routes which make up the Selwyn Link transit service. This service runs weekdays from Monday to Friday, but not on statutory holidays. Route 31, "Curve Lake – Lakefield", travels from Trent University to the village of Lakefield then on to Curve Lake First Nation, returning through Lakefield and returning to Trent University. Route 32, "Ennismore – Bridgenorth", travels from Trent University to Bridgenorth and then over the causeway to Ennismore then back to Trent University. Each route operates six times per day, with morning, midday, late afternoon, and evening trips.

The Selwyn Link Transit Service Pilot was designed and prepared to commence operation in the Spring/Summer of 2020. That was delayed by the pandemic. The service did not begin until May 3, 2021. The grant provided funding until March 31, 2025.

Additional funding has been provided, and the pilot has been extended for another year. The township has proposed to extend the agreement until March 31, 2026, with a 2% increase to the hourly rate billed by Peterborough Transit for the service being \$90.53 after March 31, 2025.

Benefits to the City of Peterborough

The introduction of a rural transit service offers several benefits to residents in both communities, including the following:

1. Access to employment opportunities in Peterborough, for Selwyn residents, and in Selwyn Township, and for Peterborough residents.
2. Access to a larger pool of employees from the City of Peterborough and Selwyn Township to support businesses/industries in both communities.

3. Alignment with the Age-Friendly Peterborough Community Action Plan, the Greater Peterborough Area Community Sustainability Plan, and the Climate Change Action Plan, where the introduction of rural transit services was identified as a key initiative to support community reductions of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and in supporting aging at home.
4. Access for Selwyn residents to educational facilities and extra-curricular programs (secondary and post-secondary) for residents, and potential access to additional student housing opportunities outside of the City for Trent and Fleming College students.
5. Opportunity for day trips for recreation, shopping, or other activities between the City of Peterborough and Lakefield, Bridgenorth, Ennismore, and Curve Lake for residents of all communities.
6. Opportunity to shift some trips between Peterborough and Selwyn Township from automobile use to transit, prolonging the life of existing roadways and reducing longer-term pressure on the need for extensive road improvements.
7. Enhanced ridership on Peterborough Transit routes, which will influence future Provincial Gas Tax allocations that are partially based on ridership data.
8. Providing more services at full cost recovery which assists in reducing the reliance on fare revenue and municipal tax contributions to fund service delivery.

Strategic Plan

Strategic Pillar: Governance & Fiscal Sustainability

Strategic Priority: Support a culture of continuous improvement, safety, and innovation to enhance effective delivery of City programs and services.

This Report fits the Strategic Priority by recommending the continuation of a City service the residents depend on.

Budget and Financial Implications

The 2025 operating forecast will generate a gross revenue of approximately \$513,000 with a net program surplus forecast to be \$8,000 for the City.

Conclusion

Selwyn Township, in partnership with Curve Lake First Nation, Community Care, and the City, was successful in obtaining further funding to support the introduction of rural transit services that have been closely integrated with existing City transit services. This maximizes the benefits for residents of both communities and allows for efficiencies in program delivery.

Selwyn Township staff and Council, have recognized the benefits of the City of Peterborough's experience in the delivery of professional transit services. In 2019, The City and Township of Selwyn entered a service contract for the provision of transportation services for a pilot program. The City has been providing this pilot program at no cost to City taxpayers, through a full cost recovery approach to service delivery. The program is seeing annual ridership increases, which improves access for residents to seek services and opportunities beyond the boundaries of the City.

Submitted by,

Ilmar Simanovskis, P.Eng., MBA
Commissioner, Municipal Operations

Contact Name:

Barry Wakeford
Director, Transit Services
Phone: 705-742-7777 Ext. 2879
Toll Free: 1-855-738-3755
Email: bwakeford@peterborough.ca