

To:	Warden Matrosovs and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	June 12, 2025
Subject / Report No:	EDTC-CW-05-25
Title:	Rural Transit Solution Fund Agreement
Prepared by:	Stephanie Stewart
Reviewed by:	Savanna Myers
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All

Recommendation

1. That report EDTC-CW-05-25 regarding the Rural Transit Solutions Fund be received; and
2. That the County of Grey supports proceeding with the rural transit solution fund project; and
3. That in collaboration with its partners, undertakes a request for proposal process to prepare a rural transit solutions study; and
4. That the Warden and Clerk be authorized to sign the Rural Transit Solutions funding agreement.

Executive Summary

In 2024, Grey County led an application to the Federal Government's Rural Transit Solutions Fund, to undertake further assessment and analysis regarding the future of transit. On March 27, CAO Wingrove informed Council that the funding application for the collaborative project between Grey County, Bruce County, Dufferin County and Saugeen Mobility and Rural Transit (SMART) received approval in principle. The three counties and agency have formed a working group to advance this work and are prepared to undertake a thorough study of a unified regional transit model for everyone's benefit and future consideration.

To accept the federal funding, which requires no matching County dollars, a Council resolution is required in order to receive the funding agreement for signature.

Background and Discussion

Over the past five years Grey County has been collecting data and best practices through the GTR. Together, Grey County, Bruce County, Dufferin County and SMART have come together to leverage their operational insights and corporate strategies as a first step to consider the creation of a unified regional transit network.

To fully comprehend the opportunity and design a suitable and realistic plan, project partners seek to undertake a comprehensive study to determine a collective path forward.

In 2025/26, utilizing the funding received from the Rural Transit Solutions Fund (RTSF), staff and partners will complete a Request for Proposal (RFP) process and engage a consultant to formalize a regional plan and budget. This first step is essential to ensure that the project is grounded in thorough analysis and realistic financial planning, and each Council and agency has fulsome information required to take any next step towards a joint, regional transit network.

Should OTIF funding be received, the funding from both levels of government will be stacked, enabling a more in-depth study to be brought back for Council consideration.

The RFP will enable staff to share lessons learned among partners, and access expertise to assist in developing the framework for a unified regional transit network serving Grey, Bruce, and Dufferin Counties. With the potential addition of provincial funding, the selected company would be responsible for designing and costing a comprehensive transit network that addresses the unique needs of each county while ensuring seamless connectivity and accessibility for all residents.

With objectives to unify transit services, improve operational efficiency, expand ridership and support regional connectivity, the scope of work would include such items as: Needs Assessment Report, Justification Report, Transit Network Plan, Fare Structure Proposal, Provider and Fleet Plan, Service Plan, Implementation Strategy, and a Community Engagement Roadmap. Council will receive this information in future staff reports for consideration.

Financial and Resource Implications

Rural Transit Solutions Fund is providing \$50,000 to support this study. With approval of Ontario Transit Investment Fund (OTIF), federal funds would be leveraged, and a complete study will be possible. Grey County is not required to provide matching dollars to support this project. The County funds currently invested to sustain the Highway 10 route are being recognized by the funder.

Appendices and Attachments

None.