

Shelburne residents ?strongly support? transit link to Orangeville: report

Is public transportation feasible in the Town of Shelburne? That's what Council was hoping to find out in a presentation Monday by Dillion Consulting.

The Town of Shelburne originally retained Dillion Consulting to assess the feasibility of operating a weekday peak period transit connection between Shelburne and the GO Bus stop in Orangeville. This connection would improve mobility options for a growing residential population making the trip between Shelburne and the Greater Toronto Area.

Dillion Consulting conducted a telephone survey contacting 300 random Shelburne residents to better understand existing travel behaviours, needs and the potential support of a connection. Based on preliminary results the following conclusions were noted:

Although only a small minority of residents travel to the GO Bus stop in Orangeville, support for the proposed transit service from Shelburne to Orangeville is strong and a considerable number of residents would be likely to use the service for a \$5 fee.

Based on the research, interest among residents for a commuter service to Orangeville is primarily motivated by a desire to commute to a final destination in Orangeville for work among commuter, or to visit Orangeville for other purposes such as for shopping or to visit family and friends among other residents, and is motivated less by a desire to travel to the GO Bus in particular.

As such, the survey found that overall 85 percent of residents support the idea of a transit route, of which 58 percent strong support the service.

Dillion Consulting admits these numbers are quite high when compared to a number of other surveys of a similar nature conducted by the surveying team.

Commuting patterns for residents show that 46 percent of residents commute outside of Shelburne on a daily basis, with 40 percent indicating that they are likely to use the service for purposes such as shopping or visiting family and friends.

A proposed route and schedule was presented showing 13 stops that would loop through Shelburne and would place the majority of residents within 400 meters, or a five 5 minute walk, of the route. With AM peak, Midday and PM peak departures, there are several proposed stops in Orangeville such as the Orangeville Mall (which also has a connection to a GO Bus stop and the Orangeville Transit route). Wal-Mart, the Orangeville Transit terminal and the GO bus stop on Broadway.

These proposed stop locations would need to be further reviewed if, and when, the Town of Shelburne decides to proceed with this endeavour.

Operating cost for this project would need to be included in the Town of Shelburne's budget and although there is funding available through Provincial Gas Tax and Trillium Grants, that would not be enough to defer all of the cost associated with these services.

If Shelburne were to move forward, Dillion Consulting recommends a two year pilot plan with specific targets being set in order to determine feasibility for continued service in the area.

At this week's meeting, questions were taken from the gallery with George Meunier asking ?is the EDC aware of the fact that the Town of Shelburne is looking at ways to bus consumers down to Orangeville to shop??

Councillor Wade Mills, who also sits on the EDC Board responded ?The EDC is aware of the issues arising from bussing consumers

out of Shelburne to shop and it is definitely one of our concerns when looking at transit from Shelburne to Orangeville being made available to residents. However, we are still aware of the need of residents needing more accessible transportation to get back and forth for work.?

To which Chair of the EDC and Councillor Walter Benotto stated ?at this time the EDC is not in favour of transit; however with further direction from council they are prepared to look at it in more depth.?

By Michelle Janzen