

Transportation investigation

Discussions at Council this week included an update on transportation issues, specifically the need for further investigation into public transportation. The delegation was presented by Ron Munro of Dufferin.Biz in coordination with Town CAO and Clerk John Telfer.

Munro referenced a report paid for by Dufferin.Biz on social services transportation needs done at the County level, reporting "the need is large, but it is being met," however, it would need attention in the near future. Munro said the issue as it pertains to Shelburne is public transportation "getting people to Orangeville to connect to Go Transit as the population continues to grow. He said the issue is "low on Go Transit's priorities." He noted there have been discussions around the possibility of Shelburne having a bus and that Mayor Bennington had asked for some investigation into this idea.

Munro said it was his "belief that if Shelburne wants to have something happen it's a political decision" and that "it will cost money and need research." He also indicated that with Orangeville the only municipality in Dufferin with public transportation in place there may be an opportunity to explore possibilities with them. He noted that Orangeville is putting together an RFP (request for proposal) to look at their transportation services and there may be "a window of opportunity."

John Telfer Town CAO/Clerk stated, "It is important to address the transportation issue with consideration to the GO transit connections out of Orangeville without the Town becoming the long term provider of the service. We have always believed the need was there to get commuters to and from work in the GTA. A private service is one option and we need explore all options including public transit to ensure we get the best option at the most affordable cost to the rider.

It is important to understand the market and the business plan that is needed to support ridership. A study will need to commence to determine and support the service either publicly or via a private contracted service. With Council's direction in place, we can explore all options and report back with our findings."

Ron Munro told Council that Dufferin.Biz was "standing by ready to help" and agreed that the next step was for he and the CAO to work together to develop a plan. "It will probably require more research," he said, "There are many different models we could bring forward" as examples to customize the plan to "local needs."

Mayor Bennington, aware of the need and in favour of the discussions, said, "We owe it to our citizens who are telling us that public transit is a much needed service and they are willing to use it. The only thing that is going to change the situation is political will."

By Marni Walsh