

Grey County buses may deliver Dufferin transit opportunities

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

Dufferin County Council hopes looking north as far as Owen Sound could help open the south.

Council discussed during its Feb. 13 public meeting how a transportation initiative in Grey County could impact movement between Shelburne and Orangeville and onto other centres.

The Grey Transit Route initiative will include service five days a week along Highway 26 from Owen Sound to The Blue Mountains and on Highway 10 from Owen Sound to Orangeville. It will also provide a service three days a week on Highway 6 from Owen Sound to Wiarton. And officials in that county are considering possibilities to stitch other municipalities into the transit route service.

Coun. Sandy Brown, Orangeville's mayor, believes it could be an opportunity to make Dufferin County more accessible to people inside and outside its borders.

"I think that's a good thing," he said. "We would benefit here in Dufferin County. I think it dovetails on some of the discussions we've been having trying to have public transit between Shelburne and Orangeville and lower Grand Valley."

Metrolinx runs a bus service from Orangeville to the Brampton GO station. Coun. Brown said the average passenger load is less than 20.

"I think it's 16 or 18 (regular service users)," he said.

Coun. Brown said Grey Transit Route users will be able to connect and use the Metrolinx service.

"I think Metrolinx is probably reviewing all of their services in the province and wants to put their money where it is most efficiently spent," said Coun. Brown.

That would enable riders from Grey County to access centres as far south as Toronto.

"Hopefully it'll all work out well," he said.

Coun. John Creelman, Mono's deputy mayor, said the Metrolinx service is a line with at least 20 potential stops between Orangeville and Brampton. And it's a service with its share of shortcomings.

"It can hardly be described as express. It can hardly be described as convenient," he said. "I think we need to keep the heat on Metrolinx to review the adequacy of the existing service and make certain it is as attractive as possible to the users."

"I would argue right now it is not."

Warden Darren White said he believes Grey County officials hope to have the transit service running by this spring.

Coun. Steve Anderson, the deputy mayor in Shelburne, asked if Dufferin County will have a wait-and-see approach regarding the Grey Transit Route or if local officials will continue to investigate other possibilities.

"We would continue to investigate all options, certainly keeping in mind the Grey County option may be a good way to assess how much of a need there is and see how effective it is," said Coun. Janet Horner, who is also Mulmur's mayor.