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Dufferin County returns Shelburne bus top on a trial basis

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Dufferin County will resurrect a transit stop in the Primrose area that was discontinued in 2024.

The Grey County Transit Route 2 connection between Dundalk and Orangeville recorded as many as 7,142 trips in 2025. That showed a continued increase in demand, requiring the addition of a second vehicle and eight daily trips.

And there have been more requests to reinstate a transit stop in Primrose, near the Shelburne Motel, to address growing demand and improve equitable access to essential services for individuals experiencing transportation barriers.

Dufferin County council decided during its May 14 meeting that a six-month pilot starting in July 2026 will go a long way toward assessing ridership, operational impacts, and safety considerations. It could cost $2,490 and is included in the 2026 budget.

Grey County has delivered transit service for the last six years through the Grey Transit Route, which included a stop in Melancthon at the Skyview Motel, two stops in Shelburne, and a connection to GO Transit services in Orangeville.

Grey County advised in 2024 that increasing demand from both Grey and Dufferin County residents had exceeded available system capacity. So another vehicle was added to ensure continued access to the service between Shelburne and Orangeville.

The Primrose stop was discontinued in 2024 due to declining usage. Recent feedback indicates that demand has increased, with several clients now requiring regular and reliable transportation.

?Reinstating the stop would support improved access to essential services and align with the county's commitment to equitable and inclusive transit,? according to a report to county council. ?The location serves individuals who may otherwise face barriers to transportation and its addition would strengthen the overall accessibility and responsiveness of the service.?

Councillor Chris Gerrits, Amaranth's mayor, asked if there was a particular reason the Shelburne Motel was chosen for the stop. He asked if the county was housing people at the motel.

Brenda Wagner, the county's health and human services director, said the motel is not a part of the county's housing program.

?But we are aware of clients that stay there that are long-term tenants there and we were approached by the Shelburne Motel to make this request on their (tenants') behalf,? she said.

Those clients are employed elsewhere, and the motel is a location in which it's difficult to find transportation.

Gerrits said he's struggling with the idea of running a six-month pilot program, given that the stop was previously on the route for 32 months and drew about 15 riders a month.

?I don't know that a six-month pilot make a lot of sense,? he said.

The contractor identified a potential safety consideration with the southbound routing to the location. Accessing the stop requires crossing two lanes of traffic on a relatively busy section of highway.

By comparison, a previously utilized stop near the Super Burger location with traffic lights was safer.

?If we're going to run a pilot, I suggest we run it at a different location,? Gerrits said.

Wagner acknowledged that the motel stop was one of the lesser-used stops. Regardless of ridership tallies, the people who require transit are badly in need of that transit.

Coun. Fred Nix, the deputy mayor in Mono, said he is in favour of countywide transit. But he is more strongly in favour of council making decisions ?with their eyes wide open,? he said.

The bus runs 260 days a year, he said. Last year, the service had about 27 rides daily. Eight trips north and eight south make 16 daily trips.

?On average, that's 1.7 people per trip,? Nix said. ?Maybe it's a good expenditure of money. Maybe it isn't.?

He suggested it may be more economical to use an Uber taxi service for those people who require the trip, as opposed to what it would cost to expand the bus service.

Coun. Philip Rentsch, who is also Grand Valley's deputy mayor, asked if the clients at Shelburne Motel could find a way to reach a bus stop at the traffic lights at Super Burger for better driver safety.

?That make sense,? Rentsch said.

Wagner said those locations are a ?couple hundred feet? apart.

Coun. Darren White, Melancthon's mayor, said there clearly is a need for the service expansion.

Wagner said her Grey County counterpart has investigated the availability of the Super Burger parking lot as a bus stop.