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Shelburne?Orangeville transit route extended until March 2025

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Riders who use the weekday transit system to travel between Shelburne and Orangeville will continue to have access to the service as the County of Dufferin pushes the agreement end date with Grey County to finish plans for transportation solutions.

During their meeting on Thursday (Dec. 12), Dufferin County Council approved a motion to continue supporting Route 2 of the Grey Transit Route (GRT) until March 31.

Dufferin County Council initially approved a motion in September to provide subsidy funding of $15,000 to the GRT program on a month-to-month basis for up to four months.

The decision to financially support the temporary service extension of Route 2, came after Dufferin County Council received a letter from Brian Milne, Warden of Grey County, in August regarding Grey County's intentions of discontinuing the route.

In the letter, Milne said Grey County had made the decision to discontinue the stops in Shelburne due to over-capacity use from Shelburne residents.

The letter also noted that for the service to continue for riders catching the bus in Shelburne, a second vehicle of the same size and seating, which is 10 passenger seats, would be required for Route 2 and would need to be funded by the County of Dufferin.

Despite mixed ideas on the longevity and cost of supporting the system, Dufferin County Council approved funding the service from September to the end of the year, allowing for the County's transit task force to explore the feasibility of the service and other options.

In October, Dufferin County's Health and Human Services Committee received a report from Brenda Wagner, director of human services, on implementing enhancements to the existing Older Adults Transportation service to address transportation issues.

The Older Adults Transportation Service, operated by the County of Dufferin, is currently limited to medical transportation, but enhancing it would provide older adults with access to grocery shopping and pharmacy visits through weekly group trips.

According to the report, there are four different potential routes and these trips would be done using the Dufferin County-owned bus, which accommodates up to 18 passengers.

The recommended routes include:

? Route 1 (Orangeville West): scheduled pickups in Grand Valley, Amaranth, East Garafraxa and west Orangeville

? Route 2 (Orangeville East): scheduled pickups in Mono and east Orangeville

? Route 3 (Shelburne West): scheduled pickups in Melancthon and Shelburne

? Route 4 (Shelburne East): scheduled pickups in Mulmur and Shelburne

In the case of Routes 1 and 2, clients would be transported to a shopping centre in Orangeville where they could access groceries and pharmacy, while Routes 3 and 4 would have clients transported to a shopping centre in Shelburne to access groceries and pharmacy.

The report noted that the routes would be subject to change based on usage patterns and community feedback.

The implementation of the enhanced Older Adult Transportation program was recommended to begin as of January 2025 but was pushed due to undisclosed matters with the Town of Orangeville.

?It's come to light that there are some additional details that still need to be worked out with the Town of Orangeville before we can start operating that service and transfer over from Grey County to Orangeville,? said County Coun. Lisa Post, who's also Orangeville's mayor. ?It is unlikely that those particulars will be able to be worked out in time for the service to start on Jan. 2 so the CAO proactively reached out to Grey County to inquire as to whether they could extend the service and continue to run it until March 31, giving us a three-month buffer to get all the details worked out with Orangeville.?

The County of Dufferin said it is working on providing an ongoing solution for transit after the March deadline. Updates and more information will be shared as it becomes available.