## Subject: Transit Update

**Department: Infrastructure Services**

**Division: Transportation and Development**

**Report #: INS-2023-053**

**Meeting Date: 2023-08-14**

### Recommendations

**That report INS-2023-053, Transit Update, be received.**

### Background and Analysis

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the number of customers or riders using Orangeville Transit for the second quarter of 2023. This report will also provide an update of the state of Orangeville Transit and some of the initiatives and timelines Staff are currently working towards.

**Ridership-Quarter 2 Update**

For comparison purposes, it should be noted that Staff has used year 2019 as the base line for the analysis as some of the data in 2020, 2021 and 2022 may have been somewhat skewed due to the pandemic and other restrictions imposed on transit systems by the provincial government. As such, staff deemed it prudent to compare the current numbers in 2023 (Q-2) to a time when there were no restrictions in place. This approach was used for Q1 reporting.

In Quarter 1 Staff report that Orangeville Transit Ridership increased 71% since the same period 2019. The data also seems to indicate that the number of monthly users is trending upwards over the same period in 2019.

Using the data gathered for this past quarter (2023), the following chart provides the actual ridership data for Orangeville Transit for Quarter 2 between 2019 and 2023, inclusive.

Quarter 2, 2023 Ridership

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2019** | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | **2023** |
| April | **9,379** | 4,838 | 5,437 | 6,705 | **15,674** |
| May | **9,477** | 5,356 | 5,139 | 7,200 | **19,844** |
| June | **8,742** | 7,455 | 5,881 | 8,259 | **20,131** |
| Totals | **27,598** | 17,649 | 16,457 | 22,164 | **55,649** |

Based on the chart and information provided, total ridership increased nearly 102% (27,598 --- 55,649) or more than doubling over the same time period in 2019. Data continues to indicate that ridership is trending upwards.

Transit Terminal Construction Update

Earlier this year, the County of Dufferin and the Town of Orangeville entered into a Memo of Understanding regarding the use of the lands at 30 Centre Street for the purpose of providing a transit terminal or transit transfer station for its fleet buses. Immediately upon approval of that agreement by County and Town Council, the contractor began construction of the new transfer station.

With the weather cooperating and the aggressive schedule of the contractor, Staff is happy to report that the project is nearing completion. Unfortunately, there has been some supply issues with lighting and other surface works that will not allow completion or the use of the station until those items are delivered and installed. Delivery and installation of the outstanding items is expected in late August where the contractor has agreed to return to install the outstanding items and complete the project.

Bus Routing for Use of New Transit Terminal

With the new transfer station in place and anticipated to be completed by early September, Orangeville Transit Staff has been working on a plan to adjust routes and bus stop times that include departure and returns through the new transfer station. Although that exercise is not complete, Staff do not anticipate any issues or additional route delays. Staff are currently discussing the new routing with its operator, First Student.

Orangeville Transit will partner with Communications to ensure the route changes will be communicated to Council, riders, users, and the community at large.

New Routing and on Demand Transit Services

Orangeville Transit in cooperation with its consultant (Dillon Consulting) completed a Transit Optimization Study (Study) in March 2022.

The scope of the Study was to review the current transit network and routes and provide recommendations for optimizing service deliver for the entire community. Based on the outcome of the study, it was revealed that a Hybrid option that included 3 fixed routes and 1 on Demand route would appear to be the best option for Orangeville at this time.

The study also revealed that, at present, only 67% of the community had transit service available. In other terms, 67% of Orangeville’s residents were within 400 metres of a bus stop whereas the remaining residents were not. The Hybrid option recommended by the study would see a significant increase in service levels resulting in approximately 95% of the community being serviced.

In order to implement the recommendations and initiate the optimal routing plan, a number of issues have to be resolved including:

* Completion of Transit Terminal or Transfer Point.
* Completion of Hansen Blvd. Bridge or crossing.
* Completion of Hansen Blvd.
* Implementation of On-Demand Service.

Based on information at the time this report was prepared, the first two items are well on their way to being satisfied with completion of both anticipated by September, whereas the final 2 items are expected to be completed by end of 2023 or the first quarter of 2024.

The Town has been working continuously with the developers of the lands west of Blind Line to complete item 3. It is anticipated that construction of the servicing and road connections, including Hansen Blvd. will be begin shortly. This leads us to the final piece of the critical path and item 4.

On Demand Service.

Over the past several months, Staff have been gathering information from other municipalities, service providers and vendors and analysing all the information for the purpose of establishing the scope for services through the Request for Proposal procurement process. Based on some of the feedback from Council, riders and other partners, Staff is confident that it has obtained sufficient information to prepare the appropriate scope of work for the services to meet the needs of the community. The procurement is expected to be out to market within the next several weeks. It is anticipated that the entire process will take approximately 4 to 6 months to be established with implementation expected early in quarter 1 of 2024.

Current Bus Fleet Update

The Town’s current fleet includes:

* 2016-01 30ft Vicinity Bus that was put into service in December 2016;
* 2016-02 30ft Vicinity Bus that was put into service in August 2017;
* 2018-01 30 ft Vicinity Bus that was put into service in May 2018; and
* 2019-01 30 ft Alexander Dennis Bus that was put into service in August 2019.

Currently and at the time of writing this report, there has been some mechanical issues with the fleet. Here is a brief breakdown of those issues:

1. 2016-01 – the Exhaust Gas Recirculation System has failed. This system is crucial for the operation and efficiency of the diesel engine. After being sent for repairs, we expect to have the bus back in service by July 24, 2023.
2. 2016-02 – The rear end component of this bus failed earlier in July. The repairs to the rear end have been completed. A road and diagnostic test revealed a problem with the air conditioning unit. Repairs are currently underway. No estimated time for return to service at this point in time. However, the plan is to have this bus back into service when the air temperatures drop, and air conditioning is not required.
3. 2018-01 – This air conditioning unit on this bus has failed. With the hot temperatures it was removed from service. The estimated time for repair and replacement of the air conditioning unit is November 2023. However, the plan is to have this bus back into service when the air temperatures drop, and air conditioning is not required.
4. 2019-01 – The air bags that lower and raise the bus for access into the unit have failed and need to be replaced. There is no supply available in Canada currently. However, Staff is working with the Operator to obtain a replacement through other sources. It is hoped that we can secure one shortly and have this bus back in service by early August.

Although the above information paints a less than ideal picture for the fleet and for providing service, Transit’s Service Provider/Operator, First Student has done an admirable job substituting buses and keeping the service running. Together with Communications, Orangeville Transit will update Council, riders and the community as information becomes available.

Bus Replacement Procurement Update

As part of the Capital Budget Forecasting Process, Staff has identified that the service life of the current bus in its fleet is 10 years. The life expectancy is based on use (total kms), hours of operation and historic data from manufactures. The 2023 Budget included grant applications for the acquisition of additional buses including one new 30-foot bus to supplement the fleet and smaller buses that provide better accessibility for those riders requiring assistance and on demand services. Transit Staff in reviewing the current and approved Capital Budget and Grant Application Requirements with Treasury have prepared a plan to move forward with fleet upgrades and augmentation.

2023

* issue request for tender for one new 30ft bus with expected purchase order to be issued in late 2023 with delivery in late 2024. This bus purchase has approved funding and requires no further approvals at this time.

2024

* issue request for tender for 2 new 30 ft. buses for purchase in 2016. Since bus delivery is expected to take approximately 12 to 14 months, Staff are recommending that the replacement of the buses that were purchased in 2015 and 2016 be procured in mid to late 2024 for delivery and in service dates in late 2025, early 2026. This item will be brought forward for Council’s consideration as part of the 2024 budget discussions.

2028

* issue request for tender for one new 30ft bus with expected purchase order to be issued in early to mid 2027 with an expected delivery date of mid 2028. This item will be brought forward for Council’s consideration as part of the 2024 budget discussions and be included in the short-term forecast.

2029

* issue request for tender for one new 30ft bus with expected purchase order to be issued in early to mid 2028 with an expected delivery date of mid 2029. This item will be brought forward for Council’s consideration as part of the 2024 budget discussions and be included in the short-term forecast.

The upcoming 2024 budget forecast will reflect these recommendations for Council’s consideration during those discussions. Staff can speak more to the strategies, back up ratios required to maintain and service the fleet without interrupting transit service. It is important to note that the above strategies are general in nature and will be elaborated upon during the short- and long-term budgeting process for endorsement by Council. For the purpose of this report, the above is meant for information purposes.

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### Strategic Alignment

**Strategic Plan**

Strategic Goal: Municipal Services

Objective: Respectful of Cost and Impact to Community

**Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan**

Theme: Transportation System

Strategy: Promote more sustainable and efficient transportation options

### Notice Provisions

### N/A

### Financial Impact

There is no financial impact from this report.

Respectfully submitted Reviewed by

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General Manager Infrastructure Services Manager Transportation & Development

**Attachment(s):**

None