

Region of Waterloo
Transportation Services
Transit Services

To: Planning and Works Committee
Meeting Date: August 15, 2023
Report Title: Local Elmira Transit Service – Operation Extension

1. Recommendation

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo extend the contract with Kiwanis Transit for the operation of the local transit circulator route in the Town of Elmira from September 1, 2023 to August 31, 2024 at an estimated annual cost of \$125,000 as set out in report TSD-TRS-23-008, dated August 15, 2023.

2. Purpose / Issue:

Extend our existing agreement and funding past August 31, 2023 allowing Kiwanis Transit to continue to operate local Elmira transit service while Grand River Transit staff complete a comprehensive “Township Transit Strategy” with each local area municipality (Township).

3. Strategic Plan:

Providing transit service in Elmira (Township of Woolwich) supports the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan’s Sustainable Transportation Objective 2.1 – enhance the transit system to increase ridership and ensure it is accessible and appealing to the public.

4. Report Highlights:

Since 2018, the Region of Waterloo has contracted with Kiwanis Transit to operate a local transit service in the Town of Elmira, known locally as the Elmira Community Bus. This local service is not branded as a Grand River Transit (GRT) service. Originally developed in consultation with the Township of Woolwich, it is currently managed and operated by Kiwanis Transit and provides connections to GRT Route 21 Elmira through connecting stops at the corner of Church St and Maple St. This route serves local bus stops in residential, industrial and commercial areas across the community, Monday to Saturday for approximately 8 hours a day (see Appendix A). The 2023 operating cost for the Elmira Community Bus was \$121,400, paid in monthly installments to Kiwanis Transit.

Transit Development staff are currently working with Township staff to expand rural transit service to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of Waterloo Region's rural residents. Consultations are currently underway with each Township to co-design and cost transit services, considering various service options that meets each areas unique needs. A replacement service for the Elmira Community Bus is anticipated to be one of the options coming out of the service planning process. Staff recommend extending the contract with Kiwanis Transit for delivery of the Elmira Community Bus until completion of this process. The existing agreement for operation of the service is set to expire on August 31, 2023. The extension is proposed to be extended by one year to August 31, 2024.

5. Background:

- Region of Waterloo granted consent in Report No. TES-TRS-18-17, dated June 19, 2018, allowing Kiwanis Transit and the Township of Woolwich to operate a pilot community circulator transit route in Elmira. Consent to operate was subsequently extended through the 2019 budgetary process and report TES-TRS-19-19, dated September 10, 2019, acknowledging a potential budget savings.
- The Elmira Circulator route does not operate as a Grand River Transit (GRT) service. The Township of Woolwich and Kiwanis Transit manage and operate this transit route. No fares are currently charged to use this route. Connections to GRT's conventional Route 21 Elmira bus route are available.
- Report COR-TRY-22-50, dated May 25, 2022, endeavoured to make this local route a part of the GRT network as a busPLUS service. The direction from Regional Council at this time was to take no action regarding Local Elmira Transit Service given the increase in cost from the pilot; and that the current pilot project be extended for another year, to August 31, 2023

Pursuant to the Municipal Act and By-law 99-077, the Region of Waterloo has exclusive authority to operate a public transit system within the geographic area of the Region of Waterloo and, as such, permission of the Region of Waterloo is required in order for the proposed transit service to be operated in its current form.

6. Communication and Engagement with Area Municipalities and the Public

Area Municipalities:

The Township of Woolwich and Kiwanis Transit staff implemented this route in 2018 and have continued its operation since that time. Grand River Transit and Kiwanis Transit are in agreement on the continuation of the Local Elmira service for the timeline outlined above.

Public:

No public consultation has been done given GRT does not operate this service.

7. Financial Implications:

The funding for this service is in the form of an area-rated tax levy to residents and businesses in the Township of Woolwich. The actual costs from 2019 to 2022 and the 2023 budget are as set out in the table below:

Actual				Budget
2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
\$85,000	\$93,000	\$109,200	\$118,700	\$121,400

There is no revenue generated from this route as no fares are collected. The Region does not provide vehicles for this service. A moderate cost increase for 2024 is expected and will be reflected in the draft 2024 budget.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

It is recommended that the Elmira Community Bus service contract with Kiwanis Transit be extended to cover the period between September 1, 2023 and August 31, 2024. Concurrently Regional staff will be working on a revised township transit strategy that will consider options including a new approach to the service within Elmira.

9. Attachments:

Appendix A: Elmira Community Bus Route Map

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