

# **The Corporation of the Town of Lakeshore**

## **Report to Council**

### **Chief Administrative Officer**



**To:** Mayor & Members of Council

**From:** Truper McBride, Chief Administrative Officer

**Date:** November 30, 2020

**Subject:** Transit Options

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### **Recommendation**

Direct Administration to include a review of local and inter-municipal transit options to support economic development and sustainable community development as part of the 2021 work plan; and,

Authorize the Treasurer to transfer \$60,000 from the Plans and Studies Reserve to support a transit service options study and return to Council by the end of Q3 2021.

### **Background**

At the November 5<sup>th</sup> 2020 inaugural meeting of the Lakeshore-Tecumseh Inter-Municipal Committee (IMC), the Town of Tecumseh inquired on Lakeshore's interest in joining discussions currently being had with Windsor Transit regarding transit service.

Lakeshore IMC representatives agreed to bring the question back to Council to provide direction on whether or not Lakeshore wishes to begin the planning of a transit service.

Transit in Lakeshore has been reviewed at a number of times over the past two decades as evidenced in Appendix A – Transit Service Review (2016).

In October 2016, Council passed the following resolution 468-10-2016:

1. Council receive the report for information regarding the review of transit services in Lakeshore.
2. Council direct that the evaluation of transit services in Lakeshore be included within the scope of study of the next comprehensive review and update to the Town's Transportation Master Plan, tentatively anticipated for 2017.

The Transportation Master Plan has not been reviewed or updated as this resolution had anticipated due to competing priorities in the annual budget cycle. The current Strategic Plan indicates the Transportation Master Plan is set for review in 2022.

In addition to the Youth Council at their November 7<sup>th</sup> 2019 meeting passed the following resolution:

Youth in the Town of Lakeshore experience barriers to accessing services, employment and social opportunities and wishes to:

1. Advise Council of their support of item 2.3 in the strategic plan;
2. Requested that Council study the need for transportation options in Lakeshore;
3. Do so in consultation of the youth advisory committee.

The Youth Committee has set transit as its number two priority to explore.

Lakeshore's Official Plan has a number of policies speaking to the importance of transit as it relates to development of the municipality.

### **7.2.3 Public Transit Systems**

*While there is no existing comprehensive public transit system in the Town of Lakeshore, the Town will support public transit system connections to the Town of Tecumseh and the City of Windsor. County Road 22 is envisaged as a strategic corridor for the creation of a public transit system which connects the Primary Nodes and the Mixed Use Node by a higher intensity, mixed use corridor. The following will be the policy of the Town:*

- a) *The Town will encourage connections with a Regional public transit system.*
- b) *The Town will support County Road 22 as a mixed use transit supportive corridor and work with the neighbouring municipalities, the Region, and transit providers to provide a viable transit service for the Town. Where transit corridors exist or are to be developed, the Town will identify density targets for areas adjacent or in proximity to these corridors.*
- c) *The Town will promote public transit connections to major community destinations, including shopping areas, Employment Areas, institutional and public services and major recreational destinations.*

### **Comments**

Transit is a vital and necessary service provided by urban and urbanizing municipalities. While transit is commonly thought of as a social service, its larger value lies in the impact it has on economic development, smart and cost effective urban development, supporting healthy lifestyles, and perhaps most significantly, reducing medium to long term transportation infrastructure costs.

While Lakeshore is the second largest and fastest growing municipality in the Windsor-Essex Region, it is the only municipality that does not have access to a public transit service with the exception of Amherstburg which is currently moving forward with a proposed pilot transit program. Tecumseh and LaSalle have local services and Kingsville, Essex, and Leamington share an inter-municipal service. Over time, the absence of transit may erode Lakeshore's competitive advantage with development to the rest of the region.

Transit is a future facing service, meaning there typically isn't vocal or overwhelming demand from the public as the existing population has made choices to live or work in a community knowing they must be automobile dependent. The high costs of automobile ownership when added on top of costs of home ownership can act as a barrier to creating inclusive communities and exasperate affordable housing issues.

Youth and seniors tend to be the two most disadvantaged groups when transit service is absent. Aging in place is a principle in sustainable community development and is fundamentally connected to transportation options. Whether you are a student needing to travel to post-secondary schooling or a senior unable to continue driving or afford the increasing costs of automobile ownership, the absence of a transit services increases the likelihood that these two demographic groups will be forced to leave their community as a result of mobility issues.

A transit service allows municipalities to plan better and become more cost effective in service delivery by reducing the need for more costly road improvements in the future. Transit enhances the efficient movement of people and allows for more strategic movement of goods as a result of less congestion on the road network.

The absence of a public transit service is also a barrier to economic development. Many larger businesses will not look at locating offices in a municipality without public transit as it presents barriers to the mobility of their labour force.

Traditionally, transit service is thought of as a looped service that runs continuously through a neighborhood to a common destination such as an employment centre, education district or downtown. Today, transit has taken on a number of different forms that provide municipalities a range of options to deliver such as on-demand service, commuter peak service, rapid bus inter-municipal service, autonomous buses or trolleys that offer a number of cost effective alternatives to the traditional model.

Administration is recommending proceeding with a transit service options study in advance for commencing an update to the Transportation Master Plan as this is typically an input to that larger body of work.

**If Council supports a resolution to proceed with a Transit Options Study, will it mean we are committed to delivering transit?**

No, Administration will return to Council with the results of the study which would then be Council's decision point on whether or not to proceed. Administration anticipates bringing this back to Council in late Q3.

**Financial Impacts**

The Transit Options Study will require \$60,000 and is proposed to be funded from the Plans and Studies Reserve.

**Federal/Provincial Transit Funding**

Senior orders of government are currently providing considerable funding to support the operating and capital costs of transit. Lakeshore has not been able to take advantage of these funding streams due to not providing a transit service. At the time of writing this report, Administration is not aware of any grant funding to study transit options.

**Attachment(s):** Appendix A – Transit Service Review

**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	Transit Options.docx
Attachments:	- Appendix A - Transit Service Review.docx
Final Approval Date:	Dec 3, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

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