

**Rural Transportation
Issues and Options for Lanark County**

Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The lack of transportation options for rural residents is a serious problem in many areas, including Lanark County. Transportation issues contribute to the exodus of youth, job-related challenges for both employers and employees, and have negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of seniors and people with disabilities or health issues. Improved access to transportation in Lanark County would contribute significantly to community attractiveness and prosperity.

This study included a review of research on rural transportation, extensive surveys and interviews, public and one-on-one consultations, document collection, and an examination of potentially relevant case studies. It examined the significance of rural transportation for community wellbeing, the current state of transportation services and resources, issues related to the supply and demand of transportation options, identification of promising approaches, and implications for the next steps in transportation solutions.

During the course of this research it was found that the breadth and complexity of rural transportation issues are not widely appreciated. Much of the input focused on particular target populations and/or certain types of destinations without recognition of how these related to broader transportation concerns. The lack of information about current transportation options was a challenge for many of the survey participants as well as for the researchers. Local social services agencies provided considerable information for this study, and revealed that there is a great deal of time and investment devoted to transportation in this sector. Issues around commuting to work proved to be quite complex, with the majority of commuting being within Lanark County, the increasing prevalence of part-time or flexible work schedules, and some significant changes in options for commuting to Ottawa. However, the review of case studies of rural transportation options showed that there are several examples of viable solutions to the kinds of transportation challenges facing Lanark County.

The major areas which should be addressed include the formation of a Lanark County and Smiths Falls working group with responsibility to develop plans to:

- reduce the demand for transportation by facilitating active transportation and by using a service-to-people rather than people-to-service approach
- coordinate transportation information to facilitate access by users and to help providers avoid duplication or identify gaps
- use state-of-the-art technologies to facilitate coordination and promotion of transportation resources and options, and the development of new models
- investigate the feasibility of a public transit system through a deeper examination of current systems in relevant contexts, and alliances with key organizations with compatible mandates

Project Consultants:

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1 INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

1.1 *Introduction: Why is this Important?*

Lack of transportation is a huge barrier for many citizens of Lanark County and has measureable consequences including:

- One reason youth do not stay in rural areas;
- A barrier to employment that affects both employers and employees;
- A barrier to education opportunities;
- A barrier to attending service agency programs;
- An additional complication for seniors and people with disabilities or health issues.

Rural transportation studies usually only look at one narrow aspect of transportation need, for example, infrastructure, seniors, commuters, people with disabilities, or active transportation. However, there is a need for a "big picture" examination of transportation issues, needs and options. In the absence of understanding of the broader landscape of rural transportation, resources could be wasted, efforts duplicated, opportunities missed, and the region could suffer economically, socially, health-wise, and environmentally.

This study provides a framework for innovative policies that will make more efficient use of the current transportation resources, identify gaps, and provide more effective access to funding sources to meet future transportation needs. It examined the significance of rural transportation for community wellbeing, trends in supply and demand of transportation options, identification of promising approaches, and implications for public policy.

1.2 *Methodology*

Input was collected through a variety of methods:

- Review of research: national (especially Transport Canada and Statistics Canada), provincial (especially Rural Ontario Institute), as well as research from other organizations and other provinces
- Surveys of agencies and organizations with interest or involvement in Lanark County transportation
- Interviews and document collection from key informants in transportation-related organizations
- Meetings with interested stakeholder groups
- Public information and consultation sessions
- Review of letters and emails re transportation sent to county admin or consultants
- Review of Lanark County and municipal websites, publications, etc. re: transportation information

2 RURAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES; RESEARCH REVIEW

2.1 *Population and Demographics*

Rural Canada is facing many challenges. The historic dependence on natural resources and agriculture is now subject to global economic and climate changes. Even in areas of rural Canada where the traditional industries are still viable, increased mechanization has significantly reduced the number and transformed the type of jobs available. Boom and bust cycles in some areas, for example the oil sands in Alberta and mining in northern Ontario, have resulted in population migration into and out of many rural areas. Generally, rural areas that are far from urban centres are declining in economic activity and population, while those close to urban centres are maintaining population but not seeing significant growth of local industries. In eastern Ontario, the population of many rural communities is declining. Even in the communities experiencing some growth, the rates of increase are typically less than those of adjacent urban centres so the rural proportion of the regional population is declining. In addition, younger people are more apt to leave rural areas resulting in an increase of the average age of those who remain. These are not healthy trends for the future viability of rural communities.¹

In the case of Lanark County, although the total population increased 3% from 2006 to 2011, the population of Ontario increased almost 6% in the same period. Several Lanark County municipalities are losing people: for example, Perth population has declined about 1% in each of the last two census periods and Smiths Falls decreased by 2% from 2006 to 2011. When compared to the province of Ontario overall, the Lanark County area (including Smiths Falls) has a significantly smaller proportion of people under age 45, and a somewhat higher proportion over age 60. The median age of the population of Lanark County is 46.2 compared with 40.4 for Ontario.²

Although population decline is often blamed on the exodus of youth, a closer examination of population migration reveals a much more complex picture. While it is true that youth and young adults are leaving Lanark County, with a significant loss of people in the 15 to 24 age range between 2009 and 2014, there is also an exodus of people over 75, and a surprising amount of “churn” (in-migration and out-migration) in the 25 to 44 age group. In the a one-year period (mid 2011 to mid 2012) almost 1,000 people aged 25 to 44 (about

¹ Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation, the State of Rural Canada 2015.
<http://sorc.crrf.ca/>

² Statistics Canada, Community Profiles, 2011 Census
<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CD&Code1=3509&Geo2=PR&Code2=01&Data=Count&SearchText=Lanark&SearchType=Begin&SearchPR=35&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>

7% of that age cohort – many of whom are heads of households with children) moved out of Lanark County and about the same number in the same age group moved in.³

Individuals leave their community for a variety of reasons: to pursue post-secondary education, to find a job, to obtain higher wages, to experiment with different life experiences, to gain independence or to fulfill one's aspirations. Some surveys have found that even if young rural individuals could find the job they desired in their home community, four out of ten would still be eager to move out to an urban centre for quality of life reasons. Depending on a narrow or a broader definition of "returners", the percentage of individuals who leave their rural community and return to it later may vary between 1% and 14%. Even with the most generous definitions and most optimistic scenarios, only a very small proportion of the people who have left a rural area as youth will ever return.⁴

2.2 *Employment and Economic Development*

Transportation issues have significant and direct impacts on rural employment and economic development. Because a large percentage of jobs in Canada are located in major urban centres, income for rural families often depends on the ability to commute to employment. Challenges with rural-to-urban commuting (cost, time spent, logistics, weather and road conditions, etc.) may explain a large portion of the exodus of youth from rural areas and the turnover of adults and families moving into and out of rural areas and small towns. In addition, rural-to-urban commuting patterns are often associated with the transfer of commercial activity from rural to urban, as people tend to shop and patronize other services close to where they work. However, this is only part of the picture. Recent studies of rural commuting patterns have found that rural-to-rural commuting for work is at least as large as rural-to-urban, and in many areas it is larger.⁵

A recent rural labour market study (unpublished), conducted by the authors of this transportation report, found a surprising number of job vacancies in a rural/small town area. These were often good jobs in high-tech, engineering, management of human resources and related positions. When employers were asked about the vacancies, they frequently cited commuting issues – people who were qualified for these rural and small town jobs frequently wanted to live in a larger town or a city but could not find practical

³ Rural Ontario Institute, Focus on Rural Ontario. <http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/rural-reports/focus-on-rural-ontario>

Vol. 3, No. 5 Oct. 2015. Youth migration, 2009-2014.

Vol. 2, No. 12, October 2014. Non-metro migration: 25 to 44 years of age.

Vol. 2, No. 14, October 2014. Non-metro migration: 65 years of age and over.

⁴ Richard Dupuy, Francine Mayer and René Morissette (2000) Rural Youth: Stayers, Leavers and Return Migrants. Statistics Canada.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11f0019m/00152/4193592-eng.pdf>

⁵ Spencer Harris, Alessandro Alasia and Ray D. Bollman. Rural commuting. November 2008. Perspectives. Statistics Canada — Catalogue no. 75-001-X

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2008111/pdf/10720-eng.pdf>

commuting solutions and were unwilling to drive long distances, so they declined the job offers. These types of job vacancies seriously hinder the economic development of rural areas.

In a 2011/12 Labour Market Group of Renfrew & Lanark report, it was reported that: In both Renfrew and Lanark Counties, as well as Ontario, the highest percentage of residents are employed in Sales and Service occupations; 26.4% in Renfrew County and 28.0% in Lanark County, and 25.6% in Ontario as a whole. Local Intelligence - Employers have indicated that there are currently many part-time and full-time employment opportunities within the Sales and service sector and that enhanced customer service training before beginning employment might assist with improved retention rates among new hires. Job seekers have indicated that a lack of public transportation within the region remains a barrier to obtaining employment and may be contributing to high turnover rates.⁶

2.3 Health Care

Lanark County is often perceived to have an older population. While it is true that the median age of the county (46.2) is somewhat older than for the province (40.4) according to the 2011 Census, it is also true that Lanark County has a smaller proportion of elderly persons (over age 85) than some other nearby counties such as Peterborough and Prince Edward County.⁷

Elderly seniors who leave rural communities often do so for health-related reasons, and transportation to medical facilities is often a critical component of this issue. Informal transportation networks - senior's social support network (friends and family) typically are relied upon to provide transportation when needed. Recent research on this topic has verified that when seniors have a long-term health condition they need help with appointments, shopping, and personal business, and the majority of this help comes from their immediate family. The report found that 25% of women and 15% of men regularly received informal help for transportation or running errands from those outside of their home. These data indicate that, for most seniors, informal transportation networks are the most popular form of alternative transportation system, with daughters being the number one source of assistance while government and NGOs provided less than 5% of the services required. The lack of transportation options may explain a large portion of the exodus of elderly seniors from rural areas such as Lanark County.^{8, 9}

⁶ Labour Market Group of Renfrew & Lanark (2011). Trends, Opportunities and Priorities Report 2011/2012.

http://www.renfrewlanark.com/userfiles/file/TOP%20Report%202011_EN.pdf

⁷ Rural Ontario Institute, Focus on Rural Ontario. Living arrangements of seniors.

<http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/uploads/userfiles/files/15%20-%20Living%20arrangements%20of%20seniors%20FINAL.pdf>

⁸ Martin Turcotte and Grant Schellenberg. (2007) Portrait of Seniors in Canada. Statistics Canada

<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/olc-cel/olc.action?objId=89-519-X&objType=2&lang=en&limit=0>

2.4 Quality of Life

Related to these issues is the concept of a “functional community”. A functional community is an area that includes all of the most-needed services: education, employment, health care, public safety, retail and business, entertainment, etc. This area rarely, if ever, matches municipal boundaries. There are many ways to estimate the minimum size of a functional community, but in order to support a high school, a major employer or diverse employment opportunities, a hospital, police and fire services, a community centre/arena, and a range of retail options (perhaps a couple of big-box stores), it generally requires a minimum population of about 25,000 people. No individual municipality in Lanark County has more than half of that number, and most have only a small fraction. However, the functional communities that encompass Lanark County and Smiths Falls include the adjacent areas that look to the four major towns for the services listed above - parts of Leeds and Grenville and Frontenac Counties as well as the western fringe of Ottawa. Collectively this area has a population of about 80,000 people. For comparison, this is the size of a small city – about the size of Peterborough, nearly the size of Kingston, about two-thirds the size of Prince Edward Island - and should be able to support most city-type services if these can be coordinated across municipal boundaries. Metroland Media, which now owns most of the community newspapers in the area, has done research on functional retail community areas for advertising and flyer distribution purposes, and identified the surrounding areas that look to Lanark County for products and services. For a visual overview of the functional area of Lanark County, see the Metroland Media map of distribution zones for the newspapers that are based in the main towns of Lanark County and Smiths Falls. <http://metroland.com/newspapers>

Factors affecting education, employment and quality of life in a rural area (or functional community) are closely inter-related. Many of the most effective approaches to rural economic development and community wellbeing feature strategies to improve participation in postsecondary education. Lanark County, like many predominantly rural regions in Canada, has a long-standing record of low postsecondary achievement.

Research with rural communities across Canada over the past several years has shown that lack of transportation to a college or university campus is a major barrier. When the distance to campus is over 40 kilometers, participation rates drop significantly or require transportation services specifically adapted to that target group. Although Algonquin College has a campus in Perth and a career and academic access centre in Smiths Falls, the people and industries of Lanark County require much broader access to higher education in order to build prosperous communities. It should be noted that, parallel to this transportation study, Algonquin College office of Applied Research and Innovation is conducting a study on the transportation issues of youth and young adults in Lanark

⁹ Trevor R. Hanson. (2008) Transportation alternatives for rural seniors in New Brunswick, Canada: Issues, policy implications and research needs. University of New Brunswick <http://www.unb.ca/research/transportation-group/resources/pdf/research-papers/transportation-alternatives-fo-rural-seniors-in-new-brunswick-canada-issues-policy-implications-and-research-needs.pdf>

County and Smiths Falls. However, access to postsecondary education is not just a youth issue, but is also critically important in second career transitions, and for upgrading of the current workforce.^{10, 11}

Studies by Transport Canada and other agencies have identified transportation safety issues related to senior drivers. Drivers over age 65 have a significantly larger rate of serious accidents, and those over 75 are involved in a particularly high rate of traffic fatalities. This is in spite of mandatory driver's licence re-testing for seniors and mandatory reporting of relevant health conditions in many provinces. Many seniors admit to continuing to drive although they are aware that their health conditions (vision, hearing, mobility, cognitive function) have declined to a degree that impairs their driving ability. Reasons for continuing to drive in these cases include force of habit, but also the significant lack of alternatives in many areas. Some analyses of data related to aging indicate a migration of people over 75 toward locations that have a range of transportation options. Overall, the research indicates that providing transportation services that are suitable for seniors is an issue that not only affects the quality of life for seniors but public safety across the community.^{12, 13}

Overall, it is apparent that rural transportation challenges contribute to rural quality of life issues that contribute to the movement of youth and seniors out of rural areas, as well as the turnover of adults and families in the rural population. These trends have significant ripple effects throughout rural areas, creating problems with employment, economic development, access to health care, and the provision of public services. Rural transportation issues are not simply about getting commuters to the city or getting seniors to medical appointment – transportation issues are critical to the overall wellbeing and vitality of rural communities.

¹⁰ Marc Frenette. (2003) Access to College and University: Does distance matter? Statistics Canada.

<http://publications.gc.ca/Collection/Statcan/11F0019MIE/11F0019MIE2003201.pdf>

¹¹ Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance – OUSA. (2004) Going the Distance: rural and northern access to university education.

[http://www.ousa.ca/uploaded_files/pdf_files/Policy%20Papers%20and%20Statements/Rural%20and%20Northern%20Access%20Policy%20Paper%20\(03.04\).pdf](http://www.ousa.ca/uploaded_files/pdf_files/Policy%20Papers%20and%20Statements/Rural%20and%20Northern%20Access%20Policy%20Paper%20(03.04).pdf)

¹² Footnote: Transport Canada (2011) Road Safety in Canada.

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/motorvehiclesafety/tp-tp15145-1201.htm#s39>

¹³ Martin Turcotte. (2011). Profile of Seniors' Transportation Habits. Statistics Canada.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2012001/article/11619-eng.htm>

3 SURVEYS, INTERVIEWS and CONSULTATION – RESULTS

3.1 Surveys

Approximately 200 Transportation Surveys were distributed online through:

ORGANIZATION	SURVEYS DISTRIBUTED
Lanark County Planning Council	51 surveys
United Way Lanark County	47 surveys
Lanark County Situation Table	32 surveys
Lanark County Chief Administrative Officers Group	10 surveys
Algonquin College Mrkt'g Research & Business Students	53 surveys
Project Consultants Robert Leitch and Nelson Rogers	10 surveys
TOTAL NUMBER OF SURVEYS DISTRIBUTED	203 Surveys

* Note: Comment sheets and letters/notes were received from six individuals

Survey Output: It is estimated that there was a 30% survey distribution duplication factor among the Planning Council, United Way, and Situation Table resulting in an estimated total of 164 surveys distributed. In total, 96 surveys (58.5%) were completed and returned. The response to survey and interview requests from the social services sector was outstanding, both in the quantity and quality of input received. The response rates from the private sector and from municipalities were disappointing. However, some notable exceptions to this trend included input from key personnel at the Town of Mississippi Mills, Township of Drummond-North Elmsley, and the City of Temiskaming Shores as well as notes from the Tay Valley Age Friendly Community consultation. Leduc Bus Lines (operator of Route 538 - Carleton Place to Ottawa commuter service) also provided valuable and detailed information (see **Appendix A: Rural Transportation Survey Results Summary**).

3.2 Key Informant Interviews and Consultations

- Lanark Transportation Association – Marilyn Bird, Exec Director
 - March 29/16 - Initial meeting at ROI Webinar Lanark County Admin Bldg
 - April 21/16 - Meeting re. partnerships with other organizations, transportation for “Life Enhancement Needs”, exploring fixed routes, provincial Smile Program funding for seniors (over 80 yrs) for transportation to appointments – assisting seniors to live in their homes
 - July 28/16 - Presentation and discussion with Marilyn Bird and LTA Board
 - Aug 15/16 - Follow-up meeting w/Marilyn Bird re. LTA charter/by-laws, operational budget and data, ridership eligibility, fees for service, dispatch, future plans for expansion (subject to board approval and mandate restrictions), marketing and promotion (to address lack of awareness)
- March 23, 2016: Consultation with Norm Ragetlie, Director, Policy and Stakeholder Engagement, Rural Ontario Institute (ROI)

- April 11, 2016: United Counties of Leeds & Grenville – Beth Steel, Consultant Review of L&G “Transportation Needs Assessment”¹⁴ study (see **Appendix B: Exec Summary Leeds Grenville Transportation Needs Assessment**). Some highlights of discussion:
 - Marketing and Communications to ridership is a priority
 - Triage and Coordination of rider demand is essential
 - Agencies not willing to share transportation budgets due to funding and governance rules – Agency transportation budgets targeted at special requirements including reporting and funding rules
 - Coordinated approach to vehicle acquisition/maintenance recommended
 - Transportation an economic development factor especially with regards to commuter corridors
 - Transportation Working Group established to coordinate needs
 - Ontario 211 used to disseminate transportation information – maintained and populated by high school coop students – resource inventory completed by summer students
- May 18/16: Mills Community Support - Mike Coxon; CEO, Jeff Mills; Coordinator, Clem Pelot; Director
 - Mills Community Support - Reducing Seniors Isolation Project (see **Appendix C: Accelerating Seniors Mobility Solutions in Lanark**)
- May 19/16 Situation Table – Stephanie Gray; Coordinator
 - Transportation and geographic isolation are an issue when accessing treatment appointments; a challenge when dealing with clients with problems who may require drivers trained to deal with special situations
 - March – April '16: the Lanark County Situation Table circulated an online survey to its member agencies, other community groups, police services boards and local municipal councils to help gather information for the community plan for safety and well-being. It was requested that the survey be shared widely within agencies to capture responses from front-line workers. The survey was divided into three major sections: agency information, risk factors and barriers/systemic gaps. Among the specifically listed issues were: lack of transportation affecting ability to connect to services, employment, school and geographic isolation leading to victimization or self-harm. Of those who responded to the survey, 83% indicated transportation was a risk factor or local issue (see **Appendix D: Lanark County Situation Table - Transportation**).
- June 2/16 Lanark County Planning Council for Children Youth and Families
 - Presentation and discussion with members focussed on social inclusion and access to services, and transportation-related barriers.

¹⁴ <http://www.twprideaulakes.on.ca/2015agendas/EKIOC-Transportation%20Needs%20Assessment%20Leeds%20Grenville.pdf>

- June 16/16 Consulted with Leah MacQuarrie, Manager, Programs & Services, Rural Ottawa South Support Services (ROSSS) regarding their rural transportation initiative. See: <http://www.rosss.ca/transportation-1/>
- June 19/16 Town of Smiths Falls - Malcolm Morris; CAO, Troy Dunlop; Director of Public Works and Utilities
 - Briefing on the Transportation Study and invitation to participate.
 - Key issues for Smiths Falls: commuter transportation to Ottawa, inter-municipal transportation among rural centres, youth transportation in community
- June 21/16 Consulted with Linda Rush, former Coordinator, Frontenac Transportation Services - Rural Routes initiative http://nfcs.ca/?page_id=38
- June 22/16 Lanark County Economic Development Committee – Transportation Study update presented by Nelson Rogers and Robert Leitch
- June 30/16 Lanark County Community Home Support - Suzanne Bourbonnais; Coordinator and Kate Tysick; Coordinator
 - LHIN funding changes, especially as they relate to “escorted transportation” for seniors and ODSP clients, are creating some issues
 - Transportation and time management challenges for younger clients needing to access medical appointments regarding mental health and addictions – working with the Situation Table to resolve
 - Staff and significant volunteer-based driver network – decline in volunteer drivers due to demographic (i.e. aging population of drivers) a problem
 - Insurance coverage for volunteer drivers can be an issue – solution: Insurance Bureau of Canada exemption certificate available through the Ontario Community Support Association
 - LTA transportation services too expensive and a deterrent for many clients; especially since LHIN transportation subsidy funding can’t be used for non ambulatory clients
- Reviewed reports from the North Lanark Community Health Centre: *Community Health Needs Assessment Results*, July 2005 and 2011 (including transportation-related issues).
 - Many health and wellbeing issues have implications for transportation – access to programs and services as well as social inclusion

3.3 Public Information Sessions

- Public Information Sessions were advertized and promoted through the Metroland Media’s Carleton Place-Almonte Canadian Gazette, Perth Courier and Smiths falls Record News, Lanark Era, The Millstone, Lanark County’s website and individual targeted email invitations. The sessions well attended with about a total of 90 people participating.
- June 22/16 - Perth – participant-driven focus on social services
- June 23/16 - Mississippi Mills – participant-driven focus on Ottawa commuters

3.4 Other Activities

- March 29/16: Participated in Rural Ontario Institute Forum: Moving ahead on Rural and Community Transportation which focused on:
 - Building transportation networks
 - Discussing shared challenges
 - Bringing home new ideas and tools
- May 25/16 Participated in a Collaborative Workshop Session hosted by the United Way and Lanark County Planning Council - Beckwith Twp Hall. Participants cited the following transportation issues and ideas:
 - Need to address issues of cost, hours of operation,
 - Explore ride share option
 - Collaborative solutions
 - Non-traditional options such as active transportation, multi-solution strategies
 - Connection between transportation needs and social housing
 - Employment opportunities – engage major employers
- July 11/16 Participated in the Age-Friendly Community Forum - Tay Valley Seniors initiative <http://www.tayvalleytwp.ca/en/municipal-government/Age-Friendly-Communities-Working-Group.asp>

3.5 Common Themes from Surveys, Consultations and Interviews

Overall, there was widespread lack of understanding of the complexities of transportation issues. Frequently, the issues raised were very specific to a location or a demographic group, without recognition of the relationship of these issues to broader transportation trends. Examples include common misunderstandings about school bus regulations and requirements, and the widespread belief that the majority of commuting to work is from Lanark County to Ottawa, when actually the majority is within the county. Some people spoke about micro-local issues - the challenges of the “last mile”, that is, transportation access for people with long laneways, on dead-end roads, or in very remote locations. However, some people spoke about the connection between transportation challenges and other issues, including physical health, mental health, poverty, disability, and environmental concerns.

There were many concerns about the lack of information about transportation options and how to access them, including frequent questions about what Lanark Transportation Association offers and how to access its services.

There was considerable interest in reducing the need for transportation through a “bring the service to the people” approach – not only for health and social services, but for expanded versions of Meals on Wheels, retail delivery options, pop-up stores, etc. Some people advocated for policies that would revitalize village or neighbourhood hubs that could serve as a common location for mobile clinics, pop-up stores, delivery drop-off,

carpool parking, transportation pickup, and related uses. Other suggestions for reducing the demand for transportation frequently included the need for more and better sidewalks, paved shoulders, trails, etc. to facilitate active transportation – walking and cycling – as well as the use of mobility scooters and similar options.

The reliance on volunteer drivers, both through formal arrangements with social services or associations and informal reliance on family and friends, was a frequent topic. On the one hand it was recognized that volunteers are currently providing valuable services to people who have limited transportation options. On the other hand, both volunteer-based organizations and individual volunteers, commented that the burden of volunteering has fallen largely on older people. This is complicated by increasing difficulty in recruiting and retaining younger volunteers, except for certain kinds of special events.

While the majority of the issues mentioned were local, there was frequent mention of the need for transportation connections from Lanark County rural areas to broader transportation services such as OC Transpo, Kingston Transit, VIA Rail, Greyhound Bus Lines, etc.

4 THE LANDSCAPE OF LANARK COUNTY TRANSPORTATION

4.1 Transportation Information

Information about transportation services and options in Lanark County proved to be remarkably difficult to obtain. Major, reputable sources of information such as Transport Canada's Access to Travel database, Ontario Ministry of Transportation index of public transportation options, the Champlain LHIN (Local Health Integration Network) list of health-related services, etc. contained little or no information about Lanark County transportation options. Websites of the municipalities in the area also had very sparse transportation-related information, and in some cases no information at all, while in other cases outdated and/or inaccurate information. Local publications such as tourist guides and seniors magazines likewise provided very little, if any, useful transportation information. There have been several transportation-related studies conducted in Lanark County but all of these have dealt with very specific topics such as the condition of bridges and related infrastructure, or the facilitation of active transportation, but no comprehensive overview of the relevant issues.

Throughout the current study many organizations were found to provide transportation services to their clients although transportation was not their core mission. These services are typically targeted at seniors, persons with disabilities or serious health issues, as well as some categories of persons with particular special needs. Very few organizations provide useful referrals for people who inquire about transportation but do not meet the criteria for service from their organization. One notable exception was Community Home Support – Lanark County, which arranges volunteer drivers for seniors and adults with disabilities requiring assisted transportation to certain types of destinations, but also provides referrals to a number of related services. There were some comments that 211

Ontario provides central transportation information in many regions, but this service is not well-known or well-used in the Lanark County area.

4.2 Transportation Providers

Reviews of business directories and economic development information revealed that there are a number of businesses providing various types of transportation services in Lanark County. Each of the four main towns is served by at least one taxi company. Greyhound serves Lanark County with two main routes: Ottawa - Peterborough via Highway 7 and Ottawa – Kingston via Highway 7 and 15, with a wide range of connections at the major transfer points. The Greyhound buses stop at most of the villages and towns along Highway 7, but travel in other directions is difficult or unavailable. For example, Greyhound service from Perth to Smiths Falls (about 20 km) requires wait time and bus transfer in Carleton Place and takes about 6 hours. Via Rail has a station in Smiths Falls, but not all trains that pass through there on the Ottawa – Toronto route will stop in Smiths Falls. Via Rail is studying the feasibility of increasing the number and frequency of stops along the Toronto – Ottawa line, but no firm plans have been announced yet. There are also several bus companies operating school buses, limousines, charters, tours and related services.^{15, 16}

There are a number of special-purpose transportation services such as the Friday bus to the grocery store in Smiths Falls, the McCoy shuttle to casinos, and the vans and coaches belonging to the retirement residences in the area. There are unconfirmed reports of Uber drivers bringing students to Algonquin College Perth Campus and perhaps elsewhere.

Lanark County has one type of public transportation – the Lanark Transportation Association (LTA). LTA was formed in 2001 and operates in Lanark County and Smiths Falls to provide transportation for people in need to life-enhancing appointments, mainly medical or health-related. The ridership is mostly persons with low income or with disabilities, although some seniors and others with special needs are accepted as clients. A large proportion of riders are clients of Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and nearly 40% of trips originate in Smiths Falls. In 2015 LTA had 16 vehicles, 15 paid drivers and 3 ½ administrative positions, and served about 740 clients (although this number includes attendants travelling with clients) on nearly 17,000 trips (an average of 23 trips per client per year). The average round trip is about 30 km as a frequent destination for medical appointments is Ottawa. For 2014 and 2015, total operating expenses were about \$750,000 per year. Revenue comes from Lanark County (about \$80,000/year), Town of Smiths Falls (generally \$8,000 to \$10,000/year) and the provincial gas tax municipal rebate (about \$350,000/year) with other income from various grant programs as well as fares. For more information about LTA, see the Rural Ontario

¹⁵ <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/transport-minister-aims-to-get-on-track-with-via-rails-upgrade-proposal>

¹⁶ <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/via-rail-ready-to-roll-out-plan-for-faster-service-along-quebec-ontario-route/article29638997/>

Institute case studies of rural transportation solutions:

<http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/file.aspx?id=c3296740-5db4-436e-a56a-07e5e0cddf16>

4.3 Commuting to Work

The topic of commuting to work is one that arises quickly in any discussion of Lanark County transportation issues. However, the complexity of the commuting situation is not widely understood. For Lanark County residents, the most common place of work is in the same municipality as their residence, although given the geographic area of some townships this does not necessarily mean that work is “next door”. In addition, many people are surprised to discover that Ottawa is not the top commuting destination for residents of many of the municipalities of the county. Even for those few places from which Ottawa is the major destination - Carleton Place, Beckwith, and Mississippi Mills – employment in the Ottawa-Gatineau region only accounts for slightly more than half of the commuters. For the workers who do not work in their home municipality, typically the place of work is in a nearby town. All things considered, the average commuting time of Lanark County residents (26.9 minutes) is virtually the same as the provincial average (27.6 minutes). (See: **Appendix E: Commuting to Work Chart**)

As far as method of commuting goes, since much of the commuting is rural to rural, and the area is not well served by public transit or equivalent options, by far the most common method is in a car, truck or van, driving alone. About 90% of Lanark County commuters travel by car, truck or van, and about 82% are typically alone in the vehicle. The number of Lanark County area residents using active transportation (walking, cycling) is small – about 7% - it is not much different from the Ottawa-Gatineau region with about 8.5% in that group. In the National Household Survey 2011, about 600 Lanark County residents claimed to be using public transit to get to work, although no such system officially exists. These respondents may include people who drive or carpool to the nearest OC Transpo stop, as well as those who consider the commercial commuter bus services from Perth, Carleton Place and Mississippi Mills to be the equivalent of public transit. Whatever the case, the number using some form of bus or transit system is very small – about 4%.

Commuting from Lanark County to work in Ottawa is undergoing considerable change. The plans for expansion of the services of OC Transpo toward the west of Ottawa may change commuting patterns as more people drive or carpool to new bus and light rail stops. The commuter bus service from Carleton Place, variously known as LCT or The Green Corridor, with linkages to OC Transpo, has recently undergone a change of ownership and may offer increased service. Currently the schedule includes two runs from Carleton Place into the city in the morning, and two runs out of the city in the afternoon. The Transport Thom commuter buses from Almonte and Perth to Ottawa have experienced decreasing ridership (by some estimates, now one quarter to one third of the number of riders compared to a decade ago), and may be discontinued by the time this current transportation study is completed.

Various explanations have been offered for declines or fluctuations in ridership of commuter services. Public transit usage in most major cities in Canada has declined in

recent years (although OC Transpo has reported a slight increase in 2016). There appears to be no single major cause – options for working from home, flexible work schedules, Uber and other technology-mediated ride sharing options have all been suggested as possible causes. In the case of commuting from Lanark County to Ottawa, all of these factors may be in effect, as well as major transitions in the high-tech industry in Ottawa in the past decade or so, as well as trends in federal government employment toward more contract and term workers rather than stable full-time employment.¹⁷

Another transportation option for Lanark County which may be on the horizon is the increased frequency of passenger rail service within Lanark County and from Smiths Falls to Ottawa (see <http://www.insideottawavalley.com/news-story/6831995-via-rail-link-between-perth-smiths-falls-could-become-reality-by-2019/>). In addition, there is a proposal in the works for rail transit “spokes” to connect Smiths Falls, Arnprior, Maxville, and Montebello to downtown Ottawa by 2018 (the Moose Consortium plan (see <https://www.letsgomoose.ca/>)). Commuting by rail generally results in the longest average commute time for a number of reasons. Commuting by rail involves a three-stage commute for most people: home to train station by car, train to transit hub, then transit to work. But the longer the commuting time, the more likely commuters will consider alternatives. Currently commuter bus has longest average time for Lanark County commuters. However, some people with long commutes report that using public transit or equivalent improves their quality of life by removing stresses associated with driving and by allowing time to read, check email, etc.

4.4 Youth and Young Adults Transportation Study

The Lanark County Youth and Young Adult Transportation Study was conducted by students of the Market Research and Business Intelligence program of Algonquin College. The study used online surveys of youth and young adults, key informant interviews, and a review of related research to examine: youth and young adult’s transportation challenges, current transportation options, and unmet transportation needs. Although the study sample was not large enough to be considered statistically valid, the study did provide a snapshot of what are likely the most significant youth transportation issues.

The proportion of youth and young adults in Lanark County and Smiths Falls reflect the provincial and national distribution. The total population of youth and young adults between the ages of 15 to 24 years in this area was 7,780 in 2011, which represents approximately 12% of the total population, and no municipality has less than 11% in this group – only slightly less than averages across Ontario and Canada (13.0% and 13.4%, respectively).

Survey respondents who had moved out of Lanark County agreed that they had faced transportation issues when living in the County, and that the primary reasons for their

¹⁷ <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/drop-in-transit-ridership-has-officials-across-canadastumped/article30178600/>

move were for access to education or transportation, although other significant reasons included:

- Less socialization due to lack of transportation
- Moved for employment/ limited local work options
- Difficult to get around without a car, especially in winter.

For survey respondents presently living in Lanark County, the major purposes of transportation were: to attend post-secondary education, to travel to work, for recreation/ leisure. For all of these activities the dominant methods of transportation were consistent: driving oneself using a car or motorcycle, someone else drove / carpooled, walked. A very small number indicated that they cycled or used taxis.

The majority of survey respondents selected “Completely Agree” with the following statements:

- I am considering moving to a bigger city for employment opportunities
- I would go to College/University if there were adequate public transportation options
- Options for work are limited because I do not have adequate transportation

According to the key informant interviews, the major issues facing local youth and young adults include:

- Limited labour market / job opportunities
- Limited transportation options /no public transportation for work or other activities
- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of social opportunities (recreation)
- Lack of education and training

Informants were also asked their opinions regarding how to address these issues or minimize the impact of these problems. Responses emphasized these themes: provide consistent, affordable, accessible transportation that would reduce barriers related to services, employment, and education and would increase opportunities for socialization and improve the quality of life of youth and young adults.

5 OPTIONS ANALYSIS

5.1 *Transportation Needs and Goals*

In order to understand the complexities of rural transportation issues, it is helpful to look at the segments of the population needing transportation as well as the types of destinations. The major population groups under consideration here are: youth and young adults, persons with disabilities or special needs, low-income adults, seniors, and adults (not included in the previous groups). Particularly in Lanark County, as in some similar environments, the transportation needs of visitors, tourists and seasonal residents may also merit consideration. In the current study, the transportation needs of children have been excluded as these are primarily related to school transportation which is mandated and regulated by the province. Other transportation needs of children is generally provided by a parent or guardian in one of the population sectors that is included. Further research is necessary on the non-school transportation needs of children, and the impacts of these needs on the wellbeing of their families. It should be noted, that within each of these population segments, women are particularly disadvantaged in relation to transportation issues. They are less likely to have a driver's licence or a vehicle, they tend to have lower incomes, and they are more frequently required to assume responsibility for the transportation of children and the elderly.¹⁸

5.2 *Transportation Purposes*

The major purposes or destinations of rural transportation include: employment, education, health care, retail and personal needs, access to social or legal services, as well as for entertainment and social inclusion. Within this framework, it can be seen that there are 32 components of rural transportation issues, some more important than others. Many of these are closely inter-related and may face common factors in both the supply of and demand for transportation. Other than private vehicles or commercial transportation businesses, Lanark County currently has partial services for about 8 of the 32 types of transportation need. (see chart below).

¹⁸ Trevor R. Hanson. (2008) Transportation alternatives for rural seniors in New Brunswick, Canada: Issues, policy implications and research needs. University of New Brunswick. <http://www.unb.ca/research/transportation-group/resources/pdf/research-papers/transportation-alternatives-fo-rural-seniors-in-new-brunswick-canada-issues-policy-implications-and-research-needs.pdf>

Transportation Needs and Goals Overview

Ridership Category	Youth/ Young Adults	Persons with Disabilities/ Special Needs	Seniors	Low Income	Tourists/ Seasonal Residents	Adults (not included elsewhere)
Destination/ Purpose						
Education		1.				
Employment						3.
Medical/ Health Related		2.	2.	2.		
Social Services/ Legal		1.				
Recreation/ Entertainment			4.			
Retail/ Personal			4.			

Overview of current Lanark County transportation options:

1. Many social service agencies and organizations provide essential transportation for their clients.
2. Lanark Transportation Association provides some services for some people with special needs or low income, and seniors.
3. Some commuting options exist from Mississippi Mills and Carleton Place to Ottawa.
4. Some seniors' residences and some private companies provide some transportation to certain recreational and retail destinations.

5.3 Rural Transportation Case Studies

During this Lanark County transportation study a few people identified transportation systems in other areas that may have some relevance to the local situation, including: Ride Norfolk, Temiskaming Shores, Haliburton Rideshare, City of Kawartha Lakes, and others. The following section includes a summary of several approaches to rural transportation, along with links to further information.

There were several suggestions about using school buses for rural transportation. But due to provincial regulations about child safety and related legal and insurance liability issues, there is no reasonable prospect of having public access to school bus routes. However, some of the following cases include collaboration between school bus companies and various transportation options, or between school boards and public transit systems.

Haliburton Rideshare

Ridesharing involves two or more travelers sharing a ride in a private vehicle, where both the driver and the passengers have a similar starting point, end point and/or route. For regular travel to the same place, this is also known as carpooling. The www.haliburtonrideshare.ca website enables registered users to offer or request a ride. The website offers advice on ride safety and etiquette, but the transportation group (all volunteer) does not check the background, licence or insurance of drivers. There are no set fees but riders are encouraged to pay the driver a reasonable amount. In addition to the Rideshare site, the community transportation group maintains a website of transportation-related information; everything from commercial bus and taxi services to volunteer drivers available through the Cancer Society or Community Support Services.

Taxi-bus Services

The City of Clarence-Rockland commissioned a transit feasibility study in 2014 <http://www.clarence-rockland.com/images/crtreport.pdf>. This study included a brief overview of several potentially relevant rural transit systems and options. The concept of a taxi-bus system was considered to be particularly worthy of consideration for sparsely populated rural areas. The Clarence-Rockland study included descriptions of taxi-bus systems in Rimouski, Thetford Mines, and Salaberry-de-Valleyfield in Quebec, as well as South West Nova Scotia and Peace River, Alberta. While there are many local variations, taxi-bus services are generally vans or mini-buses (although sometimes are regular taxis) with approximate routes and schedules that vary according to confirmed bookings. Typically, riders need to be registered with the system and book rides at least an hour in advance. The system uses scheduling software to develop the final route and schedule. In several places the taxi-bus system is used as a feeder for transit systems to provide residents in remote areas with access to transit. In most cases the fare is somewhat more than a public transit ride but less than a commercial taxi, and the cost of operating the system is subsidized by the municipality and/or the province.

Ride Norfolk

Norfolk County is a single-tier municipality in southwestern Ontario, on the north shore of Lake Erie. It has a total population of about 65,000, with one major town – Simcoe - of about 15,000 people. Norfolk also has many small towns and villages, particularly in the tourist areas along the lakeshore. The Ride Norfolk bus service has operated since 2011, providing affordable and accessible transportation throughout the county. The accessible mini-bus operates from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (except statutory holidays), with a different loop route to and from Simcoe each day. Norfolk County employs a Public Transportation Coordinator within the Community Services department, and has established a transportation advisory committee. Funding is provided by the county, the provincial gas tax rebate, and fare revenue. Research and start-up costs received funding from a variety of grant programs. Fares are \$2 within Simcoe and \$6 for rural routes, and passes as well as books of tickets are available to slightly reduce these costs. The service is operated through a contract with a private transportation company.

The same company operates a seasonal tourist shuttle service in the lakeshore/Port Dover area, subsidized by local businesses.

Ride Norfolk has its roots in transportation studies and needs analyses going back to the early 1990s and a public transportation pilot project which operated from 1997-99, then another series of studies from 2008 to 2010. The first year of operation required more than \$300K expenditure by the county, but succeeding years have seen a reduction in this expense to slightly less than \$100K since 2013. Although the original plans had been for a transportation service that might improve access to employment, the current route system and hours of operation do not support this goal. Furthermore, a significant proportion of the employment opportunities in the region are in Tilsonburg and Brantford which are nearby but outside Norfolk County and not accessible via any Ride Norfolk routes. The major users of the service are seniors, single mothers, and youth who do not own a vehicle and are travelling to medical appointments, shopping, or leisure and social activities. Ridership averages about 30 trips per day – slightly more in the summer and noticeably less in the winter – with a total of 5,000 to 6,000 rides per year. There have been discussions for several years, in conjunction with the transportation studies and in relation to the operation of the current version of Ride Norfolk, of potential collaboration with the many social service agencies which provide transportation for clients, but at the time of the review of the system by the Rural Ontario Institute in 2014 no significant cooperative agreements had been established. For more information about Ride Norfolk, see: <http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/file.aspx?id=76ea69d2-c473-47e9-9996-f919195b30d2>

City of Kawartha Lakes Rural Transit Pilot Project

The City of Kawartha Lakes (population 73,000) ran a pilot project for two years to operate a rural transit loop to connect rural areas and villages to the Lindsay Transit system. This was the second pilot project of this type that the city has implemented. The most recent project, which ended in the summer of 2015, involved a loop route that connected Lindsay with Cameron, Fenelon Falls, Bobcaygeon, and Dunsford. The Lindsay portion of the city has a population of about 20,000 and has had a public transit system for over 50 years. The rural pilot provided 10,000 rides per year with an annual budget of over \$400,000 although a large portion of that was subsidized by provincial grants. The pilot was discontinued due to low ridership and uncertainty about the future of provincial subsidies. It was estimated that an additional property tax levy of \$2 per \$100,000 of assessment would be required throughout the municipality to enable the rural route to be financially sustainable (in addition to the levy of over \$20 per \$100,000 that Lindsay property owners pay for the current transit system). <http://kawarthanow.com/2015/04/18/rural-transit-kawartha-lakes/>

Temiskaming Shores

The City of Temiskaming Shores is a community of about 10,000 composed of former municipalities including Haileybury, New Liskeard, and Dymond. Temiskaming Transit runs an hourly service seven days/week from 6:00 a.m. to 11:15 p.m. (except statutory

holidays) through Temiskaming Shores and Cobalt. The routes are more or less linear from north to south and south to north, with stops at major sites such as hospitals, shopping centres, business areas, college campuses, etc. in the town centres, connections to walking trails, and the Ontario Northland bus terminal, as well as some opportunities for stop-on-demand in rural areas. Fares are \$2.75 per ride but there are senior and student discounts as well as books of tickets which reduce fares slightly. Haileybury had a transit system since the 1980s, which formed the basis for regional transit when the communities amalgamated. The system is operated by Stock Transportation under a contract with the city. Temiskaming Transit reported 130,000 to 140,000 rides per year in 2014 and 2015. The transit system costs about \$550,000 per year to operate and the City of Temiskaming Shores subsidizes the system approximately \$150,000 per annum with a contribution from the Town of Cobalt of about \$25,000 per annum. The other revenue sources are primarily fares, the gas tax rebate, and advertising. http://temiskamingshores.ca/uploads/28/Doc_635622744331254842.pdf In the spring of 2016 the local public school board proposed an arrangement with Temiskaming Transit that would see high school students taking public transit to and from school, but an agreement has not been finalized. http://www.dsb1.edu.on.ca/boardinfo/mediareleases/files/DSB1-160406_2.pdf

Not all of the buses are accessible for riders with mobility difficulties. Temiskaming Home Support, which operates an accessible transportation service primarily for seniors requiring assisted transportation the City of Temiskaming Shores, is implementing a shared marketing strategy for a number of local transportation services in the community. Five transportation providers (Temiskaming Home Support, Patient Transfer, Ontario Northland, Temiskaming Transit, and the Canadian Cancer Society) are working together to increase awareness and inform residents of their transportation options through shared marketing materials. With additional funding from Northeast Local Health Integration Network, the project will include a central 1-800 telephone number for information. <http://www.octn.ca/ct-pilot-program/ct-projects-in-northern-ontario>

Common Themes from the Transportation Case Studies:

There are a number of common themes among the rural transportation examples examined in the current study and in the Rural Ontario Institute's report: *Accelerating Rural Transportation Solutions; Ten Community Case Studies from Ontario* <http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/file.aspx?id=c3296740-5db4-436e-a56a-07e5e0cddf16>.

There was a strong emphasis in every community on providing affordable and dependable transportation options for people who face difficulties accessing services and/or employment – particularly seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income families. The transportation solutions were also intended to increase commercial activity and improve efficiency of public services by facilitating access from sparsely populated areas. Most of the systems conducted several studies over a period of several years before they were able to select a viable option, and even then the first pilot project was usually unsuccessful. Collaborations with agencies that serve disadvantaged populations were frequently identified as a goal, but functional collaboration agreements were not

always attained. Funding the transportation solutions was often identified as a significant challenge, typically requiring a combination of municipal, provincial, social service agency, and private sector support as well as user fees in order to become sustainable. Municipal subsidies during the pilot and/or start-up phases were usually substantial, often resulting in push-back from taxpayers and/or municipal councillors. On the other hand, once the start-up issues were overcome, there was widespread recognition that affordable, reliable transportation services were significant contributors to community attractiveness, quality of life, and prosperity.

6 TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS FOR LANARK COUNTY

6.1 Reduce Demand for Transportation

In the surveys and interviews conducted in the course of this study it was frequently mentioned that the simplest solution to many of the local transportation issues would be to reduce the need for transportation. This approach is supported by much of the research that has been conducted on rural transportation. The two most common solutions under this theme are: bring services to the people rather than people to the services, and facilitate active transportation.

Considering the approach to bringing services to people, there are a number of factors involved. One is the current lack of information about transportation needs and options in Lanark County. If a central information source was established and monitored, it would soon become apparent where the “hot spots” are that require more local services. For example, in the Hamilton area an analysis of which neighbourhoods had high numbers of non-emergency visits to hospital emergency departments was used to decide the best location for community health clinics. In the current study, as well as in the research review, the concept of village or neighbourhood hubs may be an option. There could be municipal and/or not-for-profit support for space for multi-purpose hubs to serve health, social services, retail and recreational purposes in ways that could substantially reduce the need for transportation in some areas.

Regarding active transportation – primarily walking and cycling – Lanark County already has some initiatives underway. The County currently has a policy of paved shoulders on county roads, and the town of Mississippi Mills is well ahead of many municipalities in becoming a cycle-friendly community. These endeavours should be expanded across the county’s municipalities and Smiths Falls, and combined with mobility-friendly sidewalk design and construction in order to facilitate walking, cycling, and the use of mobility devices. A coordinated approach could not only reduce transportation demand but contribute to healthy lifestyles, emission reduction, and overall community attractiveness and wellbeing.

6.2 Coordinate Existing Transportation Resources

During the course of this study it proved to be remarkably difficult to determine what transportation options currently exist. A review of websites and publications of the County and all of the area municipalities, as well as community guidebooks and information resources, did not reveal an accurate and comprehensive picture of transportation-related resources. As this study progressed, additional transportation stakeholders frequently came to light until it was estimated that there are over 100 companies and organizations providing or arranging transportation of some kind – for a population of 66,000. A central source of information is seriously needed in order to enable residents to access the transportation they need, and for organizations to make more efficient use of the services they provide.

In many areas this central information services is provided both online and by phone by the 211 organization – in some places the source of most of this information is Community Home Support. In Lanark County both of these organizations are providing quite a lot of transportation-related information but they were far from comprehensive at the time of this study. Leeds and Grenville has used a low-cost system of student workers to regularly update transportation information for the 211 service. There are many approaches which could be taken to address the lack of transportation information in Lanark County, and this issue needs to be addressed in some manner in the near future.

6.3 Innovation in Transportation Collaboration

Once transportation information is more readily available in Lanark County, it will become apparent that there are many opportunities for collaboration. Collaborative efforts could be spearheaded by the County, by a municipality, by a not-for-profit organization, or through a public-private partnership. Indeed, 67% of respondents to the Lanark County Transportation Survey indicated that they were interested in more transportation collaboration with other organizations. For example, some form of taxi-bus service, as described in the case study section above, could be operated collectively by a group of agencies and could make their transportation services much more efficient and cost-effective. There have been many recent developments in scheduling software that could enable this approach or similar collaborations, and there are companies that provide scheduling, booking and payment/billing services for a reasonable transaction fee. In addition, though having public access to school buses while students are riding is not possible for regulatory and liability reasons, a collaborative booking service and scheduling software could enable a partnership with school transportation providers in times other than school runs.

Another collaborative option that can be enabled by innovative technology developments is ridesharing. For example, following Lanark County's Transportation Study Public Information Session in Mississippi Mills (Almonte) on June 23/16, "A Not-for-Profit Community-Based Rideshare Program for Mississippi Mills" proposal was received from Frank Sukhu and Theresa Peluso (see **Appendix F: A Not-for-Profit Community-Based**

Rideshare Program Proposal). In addition, other examples of technology-enabled rideshare solutions were mentioned during this study:

- RideShark.com <https://www.rideshark.com/> and
- UberPool Ridesharing service <https://www.uber.com/ride/uberpool/>.

6.4 Public Transit

Several types of rural public transit were outlined in the case study section above, and there are many more in the related research that is listed. According to a recent study of public transit systems for the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA), there is a wide variation of approaches to public transit in Canada, especially in rural, small town and small city contexts. The CUTA study included an analysis of “specialized transit” – transportation services for persons with disabilities or disadvantages. Across Canada, in places under 100,000 where specialized transit exists, generally 1% to 2% of the population registers or enrolls in the service in some way, and these clients take an average of nearly one trip per week (45 trips per year). The overall cost of providing this service also varies widely, with net costs (expenses minus fares, based on 2008 figures) ranging from \$5 to \$20 per year per capita of the area served, with an average of about \$10. Applying the averages to the Lanark County and Smiths Falls context, with a population of about 66,000, it would be expected that there would be about 660 to 1320 clients taking 30,000 to 60,000 trips per year. The net cost (not considering grants or non-fare income) could fall within a range of \$330,000 to \$1,320,000 with the anticipated average being about \$660,000. Ridership and costs may vary widely for many reasons, including operating specialized (accessible) transit separately or integrated with public transit, as well as population density, distance to major centres, and promotion of the service. The cost of operation ranges from \$40 to \$120/hour per vehicle, with an overall average \$80/hour per vehicle among the systems that were examined. It should be noted that the research indicates that it typically takes four to five years to build ridership up to the potential usage rates, and it may take five to ten years.¹⁹ In Lanark County and Smiths Falls the Lanark Transportation Association provides many of the types of services examined in the CUTA study, to about 740 active clients taking a total of about 17,000 trips per year with an annual budget of \$750,000 (including a contribution of about \$90,000 per year from the County and Smiths Falls). The LTA services for assisted transportation are supplemented by many, many agencies and organizations which also provide transportation to this target population.

Considering broader approaches to rural public transit (i.e. serving the general public not only those with special needs), there is generally no simple, cost-effective solution to transportation needs in rural and small town contexts, as can be seen in the case studies outlined above and in the related research. The Temiskaming Shores system appears to be one of the better examples, providing effective service to a small population (a service

¹⁹ Wally Beck & Mark Mis. (2010). Right-Sizing Transit: What is a reasonable level of transit investment? Canadian Urban Transit Association.

<http://conf.tac-atc.ca/english/resourcecentre/readingroom/conference/conf2010/docs/r2/beck.pdf>

area of about 12,000 people) over a large geographic region with connections to major sites such as hospitals, shopping centres, business areas, college campuses, etc. in the town centres, connections to walking trails, and inter-city bus terminals, as well as some opportunities for stop-on-demand in rural areas. This system has achieved a remarkable level of success with ridership reaching about 140,000 rides per year, very reasonable fare rates, and a total subsidy from participating municipalities of about \$175,000.

Adapting some ballpark estimates from the CUTA study, the Clarence-Rockland study, and Temiskaming Shores to the Lanark County and Smiths Falls context yields some interesting possibilities. A loop route that would connect Perth, Smiths Falls, Carleton Place, and Mississippi Mills (downtown Almonte) would be about 110 kilometres in length. This route has an estimated driving time (based on Mapquest) of approximately 1 hour 15 minutes, which would translate into about 2 to 3 hours by public transit bus. To attain a minimum reasonable service level (i.e. a bus every hour or 1 ½ hour at each stop, each direction) would require 4 buses on the road at a time (2 in each direction). For service 10 hours/day Monday to Friday, plus 5 hours per day Saturday and Sunday, there would be a total of 60 service hours per week. Estimating the cost of bus operation at \$80/hour (based on CUTA studies), the cost of operating the system would be about \$1 million per year up to about \$1.25 million per year (based on the Clarence-Rockland study estimates of \$105/hour). If ridership rates reached levels similar to Temiskaming Shores, there could be over 700,000 rides per year provided. It would likely take several years to attain this ridership level, and due to the geography of this area the system probably would need to be supplemented by a taxi-bus or similar system in order to provide widely accessible service and increase usage.

Regarding commuter rail service from Smiths Falls to Ottawa, it is possible to develop some preliminary ballpark estimates. Based on information from the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), and related estimates, the total number of people commuting to work in the Ottawa-Gatineau region from Smiths Falls and the adjacent townships is about 2300 (see chart below). According to the NHS, about 20% of commuters indicate that they would consider public transit if it was available, which would be 460 people. However, across Canada only Montreal and Toronto have achieved a rate of over 20% of commuters using public transit. Typically 5% to 10% of commuters use public transit where it is available, and it generally takes several years of operation before realistic ridership rates can be determined as people do not change long-standing travel habits quickly. At these rates there could eventually be 115 to 230 clients for commuter service from the Smiths Falls area to Ottawa-Gatineau. Note that this is the potential number of clients - ridership on any given day would likely be in the range of 2/3 to 3/4 of this due to flexible work schedules, vacations, sick days, etc. So commuter rail to Ottawa from Smiths Falls might have 60 to 70 riders to start, with a long-range (rather optimistic) potential of 150 to 170 riders per day (each direction).

Commuting from Smiths Falls and Area	Commuters to Ottawa	Source of Data
Smiths Falls	525	2011 NHS
Montague	465	2011 NHS
Rideau Lakes	260	2011 NHS
Drummond/North Elmsley	750	NHS data n/a Estimate based on comparable region
Elizabethtown/ Kitley	290	NHS data n/a Estimate based on comparable region
Total	2,290	

There are few options for any significant increase in ridership on this route. Beckwith Township has a large number of commuters, but the vast majority of these would be better served by the commuter bus from Carleton Place or OC Transpo from Richmond. The VIA Rail line from Smiths Falls to Ottawa goes through the Marlborough Forest, a conservation area which is one of the least populated areas in the region. The next potential commuter train stop would be Richmond, which is already served by OC Transpo. On the other side of Smiths Falls, the next feasible location for a stop would be Jasper, but that area has a very small number of potential commuters to Ottawa. While the 2016 census results are not yet available, in recent years the population has declined in Smiths Falls and Elizabethtown-Kitley, and some other municipalities in the area. It is unclear whether the availability of commuter rail would reverse this trend.

In addition, there are other factors that may be related to increased frequency of rail service. Improved rail connections from Smiths Falls to Ottawa would also likely increase access to health care, social services, retail and entertainment. The largest peak ridership is likely to be for major events in Ottawa – concerts, sports events, large festivals, etc. Whether this would result in stabilizing or increasing the population of Smiths Falls requires additional research. On the down side, research on rural transportation indicates that improved access to urban centres usually has a negative effect on local retail and service businesses – people tend to shop, eat, and use commercial services close to where they work. Increased commuting by rail from Smiths Falls is likely to decrease local retail and business activity.²⁰ In the long run, many projections indicate that viable small towns need to be connected to medium-sized cities, not to large cities.²¹ So in the future the most valuable passenger rail linkages from Smiths Falls and area may be to Brockville and Kingston rather than to Ottawa.

²⁰ Yolande Chan, Jeffrey Dixon & Christine Dukelow. (2013). “ Goods, Services and People Movement” Chapter 12 in *Revitalizing Rural Economies; A guide for practitioners*. McGill Queen’s University Press.

²¹ Suzanne Morse (2014). *Smart Communities; How citizens and local leaders can use strategic thinking to build a brighter future*. (2nd edition). Jossey-Bass.

7 NEXT STEPS

It is recommended that Lanark County take the following actions:

- Establish a Transportation Working Group with representation from these sectors/groups: Social Services, Health Service Providers, Youth Centres, Long Term Care and Home Support, Chamber of Commerce, Transportation service providers, County staff and council.
- Task the Working Group with reviewing the findings of this report – Section 6 Transportation Solutions for Lanark County and develop a Plan of Action. Note that there are excellent resources to guide this activity from sources such as Transport Canada²² and the Rural Ontario Institute²³.
- Join the Ontario Community Transportation Network <http://www.octn.ca/>. This collaborative project between the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition (OHCC) and ROI is focused on developing a Community Transportation (CT) Network, with funding from the Ministry of Transportation-Ontario (MTO) for the period of April 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017. The goal is to develop and implement an engagement strategy to inform, support, consult and collaborate with community transportation and rural stakeholders. For further information contact: Lisa Tolentino, Project Coordinator, Lisa@ohcc-ccso.ca

²² Transport Canada (2009). *Improving Travel Options in Small and Rural Communities*. https://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/GMF/Transport_Canada/ImprovingTravelSmallRural_EN.pdf - A guide to help practitioners (engineers, planners, health professionals, economic development officials) improve travel options for residents of small and rural communities. This includes a range of actions that make personal transportation activities more sustainable - encouraging drivers to operate their cars more efficiently, or to leave their cars at home and walk, cycle, take transit or carpool instead. This guide can act as a “first stop” in the search for help by offering an overview of key issues, summarizing the principal strategies that are most likely to be relevant to smaller and rural communities.

²³ Dillon Consulting for Rural Ontario Institute (2014). *Towards Coordinated Rural Transportation: A Resource Document*. <http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/file.aspx?id=b5980041-d1ce-4618-b742-1d62c39208f1>

A number of rural municipalities, agencies, and private sector companies have responded to fill the transportation gap. The result is often a very disconnected system of transportation providers, each with their own goals, servicing different client groups, trip types, and different geographic areas that do not always meet the needs of all residents. However, other rural communities have established a cost-shared Coordinated Transportation model that helps address the disconnected nature of multiple public and community transportation providers and enhances the cost-effectiveness of mobility as a whole, thereby improving overall service quality and accessibility. This user-friendly resource allows partners to assess and identify opportunities to collaborate, develop a coordinated model and achieve greater cost-effectiveness of service delivery and ultimately enhance the level of transportation available.

Appendix A: Rural Transportation Survey Results Summary

Transportation Needs

How do the majority of your clients get to your programs and/or services?

- General: The vast majority of organizations reported that their clients arrange their own transportation to access programs and/or services – they walk, bike, self-drive, family-drive, friends, hitch-hike or use community partners, volunteers, occasionally taxis, Lanark Transportation Association and transportation organizations such as Mills Community Support
- Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) only provides funding for medical travel. Clients may use their own vehicle (or be driven by family/friends) and be reimbursed \$0.18/km. If they cannot provide their own transportation, the most economical mode of transportation will be approved with verification of appointments. This may include organizations like Lanark Transportation or Mills Community Support, local taxis, or train or bus fares. This limitation can mean clients may go without necessary items or supports for their wellbeing.
- Lanark County Development Support Services: Case Managers travel to them. Less than 1% have a driver's license
- Lanark Renfrew Health and Community Services: Workers provide transportation to and from programs
- The Table Community Food Centre: Most have to find their own transport, but they use LTA for transporting youth to their After School Program and also to our Harvest Kitchen Program. The Table also delivers to people who have mobility/transportation issues.

What challenges do they encounter in getting to your programs and/or services?

- General: Many organizations reported that their clients don't have the means to get to the different activities and programs because of financial challenges or lack of a vehicle, no access to public transportation - mobility issues that affect walking, illness, distance, and the weather - leads to isolation
- Children's Resources on Wheels: Some clients are not able to get to programs due to lack of transportation. Services may be offered by telephone.
- North Lanark Community Health Centre (Lanark Renfrew Health and Community Services): Without paid workers support to transport them to and from the programs and activities they would be unable to participate. Transportation support through Lanark Transportation Association is beyond many peoples financial means (eg. it costs \$40.00 for a client in Lanark Village to travel 3 km to get to the Health Centre using LTA).
- Lanark County Children Services: The challenge is for families with young children both urban and rural without access to transportation to attend child care or early years programs.

- The Table Community Food Centre: Many of our participants suffer from physical chronic conditions and mental illness which we know to be aggravated by poor diet and yet many of our participants are regularly unable to access healthy emergency food because they are unable to walk to the centre or afford alternative transportation. Many participants are living in very isolated rural settings dependent on family, neighbours and friends for transportation. It is one thing to ask for a ride to the doctor's but quite another to ask for a ride to the food bank. Rather than divulge how desperate in need they are, they will often go without. Clients have been told in the past they couldn't get rides with LTA so we had people who are unable to come to us for help/service.
- Lanark County Food Bank: For those who live rurally, it is nearly impossible to access our services unless they have access to a vehicle. Because of transportation issues, many people don't even register with us. If there was a way for them to get to our location and get their groceries home, it is estimated that we would be able to serve at least 15% more families.
- Ontario Works: We offer services at our three main offices (Smiths Falls, Perth, Carleton Place). Those who live outside of the three main towns and have no access to a reliable vehicles struggle the most to access programs.
- Lanark Lodge: Access to service, availability of service, ability to pay for service (some are cost prohibitive), access to special devices for wheelchair or stretcher transportation. It means that for residents there is a barrier to access services such as their dentist, eye doctor and other specialists. For families it may result in reduced visitation of their loved one. For volunteers, potential hires and students it may mean not coming to Lanark Lodge to work or complete placements as they have no reliable, affordable transportation.

Transportation Services

How well are the transportation needs of your clients being met?

- General: Many agencies reported that, in many cases, the transportation needs of the most vulnerable are not being met resulting in clients not being able to attend programs due to transportation issues.
- Almonte General Hospital: Assess and Restore program clients are able to access funding to support the cost of transportation. Other clients pay for transportation through The Mills and this service is excellent.
- Alzheimer Society: The needs are being met. But, volunteers transporting individuals with dementia should have some education about the disease.
- Ontario Works: Transportation continues to be a huge issue. It is stated by our clients as being one of their main barriers to accessing the labour market, educational opportunities and various supports within their community. The lack of public transit has made our clients even more vulnerable and highlights the disparity between the have and the have nots.
- North Lanark Community Health Centre: We are not meeting the needs of our clients who lack access to reliable transportation to get to medical appointments or to participate in groups that would help their health and well-being.

- Lanark Community Programs (LCP): Clients attending Family Relief programs receive transportation. While LCP also arranges transportation for a variety of other family needs, it is difficult due to costs and lack of resource to meet everyone's requirements. Over the years, LCP has found that children did not make it to programs and missed out on valuable experiences. Families in turn did not get respite a vital part of sustainability of the family unit. While the transportation costs are high in a rural setting the overall result of not providing this service creates a more expensive crisis in the family.
- Lanark County Community Home Support: We are able to provide volunteer drivers for most requested drives. We cannot accommodate wheelchairs.
- Lanark County Community Justice: They are not being met at all. Some of our clients are unable to attend their mandatory court appearances due to lack of transportation resulting in a bench warrant being issued for them. Many clients have difficulty completing their community justice forum agreement because of lack of transportation resulting in their case being returned to the police or the Crown. They're often isolated and not accessing services.
- Lanark County Community Living: Internal transportation is very good and consistent. Transportation provided by external services is inconsistent and very expensive.

Please complete the following statement: "In an ideal world, what I would most like to see improved about Lanark County transportation is ..."

- General: Most survey respondents would most like to see: safe, reliable, regular, accessible (barrier free), convenient, consistent and affordable transportation to all in need and for all age groups.
Other comments:
 - Charge a fee when appropriate and affordable.
 - Subsidized for those on assistance, those with accessibility issues and for seniors/students.
 - Safe, accessible and inexpensive transportation with a sliding fee scale that is appropriate and affordable and free for those most in need
 - Remove barriers to enable clients to attend programs and/or other health and wellness services.
 - Promotion of transportation services - Greater marketing of the service and a wider audience that it services i.e. youth, families, seniors
 - Possibly even a small bus service once or twice a week, that might travel from town to town and within the towns themselves
- Lanark County Ontario Works: "I would like to see the populations that are most vulnerable have access to transportation to allow them to move forward, access service and reach their full potential. Lack of transportation leads to isolation and lost opportunities." Tammy Kealey- Donaldson, Manager
- Big Brothers Big Sisters: Accessible (LTA was difficult to reach, didn't want to provide service to us as we needed it and was cost prohibitive)
- Ontario Works: Clients need to have more access to Lanark Transportation

- Lanark Renfrew Health and Community Services: That we would have affordable transportation throughout the county. That we utilize all existing resources including vehicles owned by other agencies and businesses. That we analyse the data to see the actual need and resources in our County and respond appropriately to the data. Full access/funding for low income, geriatric, disabled people to primary care, allied health and health promotion programs plus grocery shopping.
- Mills Community Support: sharing of existing vehicles and drivers among all organizations/ sectors
- Waterside Retirement: a coordinated effort for shared locations to provide a para-transpo style bus service that could be supported by local doctor's office, Ottawa Heart Institute, CNIB etc... to accommodate some same block appointment times for like users

Other Comments worth noting: Meeting Transportation Needs

- Almonte Country Haven: Overall, Lanark Transportation Association services have been very helpful and easily accessible for our residents and their family members for arranging transportation for appointments, events, etc.
- Children's Resources on Wheels: In the past there was transportation funding available for rides to playgroups and parent education. That funding is now only available to licensed child care centres so this option is no longer available for families outside of licensed child care.
- Lanark County Housing Corp: If there were a regular source of transport available it might enable people to find work in other towns within the municipality or even within their own towns that wouldn't require using taxis or possibly extremely long walks at various times of the day or night.
- Lanark County Development Support Services: Working with vulnerable populations we appreciate that a person's ability to be mobile affects their economic status and affects their ability to be inclusive in their communities. As with seniors, we encourage folks to live in the hub of their communities where they might have access to services and support to promote social inclusion. If folks could travel more independently they would have less need for paid support accompaniment, except where that made sense.
- Lanark Renfrew Health and Community Services: We run seven weeks of summer camp for children and youth with intellectual disabilities some of the most complex youth in the community. We hire a bus company to pick up campers in Smiths Falls Perth and transport them to a camp in Carleton Place. The bus is much more cost effective than any other way we have attempted to transport these youth. Transportation is our biggest barrier in providing programming to families in Lanark County. Families are often paying as much or more to transport their family member to activities/programs as they are to attend the program and pay the worker.

Appendix B: Exec Summary Leeds Grenville Transportation Needs Assessment

The purpose of this needs assessment is to collect and offer quantitative and qualitative information on transportation needs, barriers and habits from residents of Leeds & Grenville. More specifically, the purpose is to collect data at the community level from each municipality and township to understand the specific transportation needs of each community.

The information within this transportation needs assessment has been gathered using multiple methods in order to increase the number of respondents. More specifically, this transportation needs assessment gathered information through physical and online surveys, community consultations including focus groups and interviews, and a survey of community partners.

Based on the findings there are many residents of Leeds & Grenville that do not have any transportation needs. Not having any unmet transportation needs is almost wholly based on the ability to drive and being able to afford the ownership and operation of a car. That being said, based on the information gathered from this transportation needs assessment, there is a significant portion of the population who are not having their transportation needs met by the current transportation landscape.

The main finding from this transportation needs assessment is that there is a significant unmet need for transportation in Leeds & Grenville. This needs assessment has uncovered this as well and provided some insight into the details of what those transportation needs are. Perhaps the most significant statistic generated from the survey responses was the 23% of respondents who said their transportation needs were currently not being met. This number was determined to be proportionally higher among those with lower income brackets and those of increased age.

From the information gathered it was determined that 53% of respondents' main mode of transportation was a mode other than driving a personal vehicle. This suggests that there is a significant proportion of the total population of Leeds & Grenville that don't drive a personal vehicle. Additionally, it has been demonstrated by the transportation needs assessment, that without being able to drive a personal vehicle, it is significantly more challenging for residents to meet their daily transportation needs.

Of the destinations most difficult to get to, medical appointments and community services combined for 37%, and is identified as the highest unmet need. Food and personal supplies was next at 19%, followed by recreation at 12%, and employment and access to family and friends both at 11%. Of the communities in and surrounding Leeds & Grenville determined as most difficult to get to, Kingston, Brockville, and Ottawa are the top three communities in this regard.

By not being able to meet their transportation needs, respondents indicated that this negatively impacted their quality of life by having to rely on others, feeling isolated, and not being able to access the destinations and services they need. Conversely, respondents also indicated that having better transportation available would positively impact their lives in a number of ways.

Based on interviews with other transportation service providers in rural Ontario it was revealed that all of their transportation services were developed in response to an identified need(s), and that the logistical and operational form of the transportation service was determined by that need. By applying this concept of having the transportation need determine the type of transportation service to the information gathered from this transportation needs assessment it is possible to

gain insight into what kind of transportation service might be suitable to the Leeds and Grenville context.

Recommendation: Based on the information presented in this report and gathered from the transportation needs assessment it is recommended that a rural transportation service be developed to serve the residents of Leeds & Grenville as it has been clearly demonstrated that there is a need for such a service. If the community, service providers, and municipalities choose to proceed with the development of a rural transportation service, we recommend the following:

Consider Model 2 – Brokerage Central Coordination as the framework for a future transportation service. The benefits of this model include:

- a. Maximizing efficiency and coordination of available resources.
- b. Ability to provide transportation service for a range of transportation needs.
- c. A single coordinating agency allows for convenient ride booking and use of the transportation service by the end user.
- d. Allow agencies to retain ownership and operation of vehicles
- e. Provide an opportunity for the central coordinating agency to operate new fixed routes with dedicated vehicles.

Operate a future transportation service using a hybrid model that combines:

- a. On-demand flexible transportation across the United Counties to meet the range of low to mid-frequency transportation needs such as medical and community service appointments, groceries and personal supplies, and recreation.
- b. A rotating fixed route inter-community transportation system along high demand corridors such as Gananoque to Kingston to meet the need for inter-community transportation.

Ensure that the future transportation service will be affordable by subsidizing the cost of transportation for the end user through a range of funding channels including:

- a. Provincial gas tax funds
- b. Financial support from the municipalities whose residents are served by the transportation service
- c. Additional funding generated through advertising revenue and fundraising

By taking steps to implement these recommendations together, the community, municipalities, service providers and community agencies, will be working together to improve the transportation landscape in Leeds & Grenville and provide opportunities for those whose transportation needs are currently not being met.

September 4, 2015

Appendix C: Accelerating Seniors Mobile Solutions

THEORY OF CHANGE

Accelerating Seniors Mobility Solutions in Lanark

Public and non-profit organizations in Lanark County have the stewardship of extensive assets which are directed towards transportation. By working together and utilizing these assets in a coordinated fashion, organizations are able to improve the mobility of seniors (and their support network/families). The result will include enhanced community vitality, progress towards an “age-friendly Lanark” and a good life for seniors.

WHO

- Stakeholders**
- Primary**
- Older adults living in Lanark County (aged 55+)
 - Including seniors with intellectual disabilities
- Secondary**
- Caregivers, families and others in the support network for seniors
- Tertiary**
- Organizations supporting seniors
 - Organizations providing transportation
 - Municipalities in Lanark

HOW

- Transportation assets and investments in services are shared and delivery is coordinated.**
- A formal alliance of public, private and non-profit providers of transportation has been established. This network has effective agreements which provide for:
 - Shared use of vehicles
 - Coordinated/centralized scheduling
 - Shared maintenance and insurance
 - Shared promotion/marketing and common protocol for “customer service”

- Transportation, community wellness and community vitality have a central place in community planning and administration.**
- Accessible/affordable/active transportation is integrated into health promotion strategies; municipalities have established formal commitments to incorporate into planning.
 - Community wellness and vitality are measured and used as indicators in public accountability.
 - Funders and institutions remove barriers to resource sharing and collaboration in the provision of transportation.

- Transportation planning and delivery is coordinated with opportunities for participation in healthy living activities, volunteering and civic engagement.**

- Informed Seniors and Caregivers**
- Seniors have up to date information re transportation services and support in making effective use of services so that they can participate in community.

OUTCOMES

- Longer-Term Outcomes**
- Seniors have access to options/choices re affordable transportation
 - Seniors utilize resources available to participate in community activities and contribute to community vitality
 - Seniors experience more social contact(s) – build social capital
 - Community wellness/health improves – health care costs and institutionalization are reduced
 - Public/investor ROI in transportation improves
 - Transportation services and active transportation are reflected in local/regional planning – blended value is utilized in public measurement strategies/balance – social/economic/environmental benefits

- Leading To**
- Older adults experience improved wellness and increased connection to their community.
Community vitality is enhanced.

Mills Community Support – Theory of Change Accelerating Seniors Mobility Solutions in Lanark (Q43)

V1 (July 10, 2015) MC

Appendix D: Lanark County Situation Table - Transportation

Submitted by: Stephanie Gray, Lanark County Situation Table Coordinator - June 10, 2016

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this document is to provide information from the Lanark County Situation Table perspective to project consultants Nelson Rogers and Robert Leitch for the Public Transportation Solutions Study for Lanark County and the Town of Smiths Falls.

The Lanark County Situation Table is a project of the Perth Police Services Board that officially began in September 2015. It has two main components: the creation of a situation table and the development of a community plan for safety and well-being for Lanark County and Smiths Falls. The philosophy behind the model is to identify the root causes of crime and social disorder and to work to prevent or mitigate them.

Situation Table:

The situation table (which has also been called “the hub model”) brings front-line, acute-care, human-service agencies together to provide wrap-around support for individuals who meet a defined threshold of “acutely elevated risk.” The definition, essentially, sees them on the brink of harming themselves or someone else imminently. There are currently representatives from 19 local agencies working in a privacy-protective manner to rapidly connect these individuals to appropriate services. The situation table has been meeting twice monthly since December 9, 2015. Part of its work involves identifying vulnerable populations, tracking prevalent local risk factors (from a provincial database of 103 risk factors and 26 study flags), and identifying systemic gaps. Transportation is one of the study flags being tracked.

Agencies represented at the Situation Table as of June 2016 include the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario; Change Health Care Inc.; Family and Children’s Services of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville; Lanark County Interval House; Lanark County Mental Health; Lanark County OPP; Lanark County Paramedic Services; Lanark County Social Services; Lanark County Victim Services; Lanark, Leeds, Grenville Addiction and Mental Health; Leeds, Grenville, Lanark District Health Unit; Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Probation); Ontario Disability Support Program; Open Doors for Lanark Children and Youth; Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital; Lanark County Probation and Parole; Smiths Falls Police Service; Transitional Aged Youth Program; Upper Canada District School Board.

Community Plan for Safety and Well-being:

The next phase of the project is to take what is learned through the situation table process as well as in partnership with a broad spectrum of community service agencies (i.e. justice, social services, mental health, addictions, education, health, government, private sector) to develop a community plan for safety and well-being. This collaborative process will take advantage of data collected through the situation table as well as by partner groups outside of that vehicle to confirm or develop action plans to address matters of safety and well-being.

DISCUSSION

Situation Table Data:

Since the Situation Table began meeting in December 2015, transportation has been identified as a significant issue affecting many of those referred by member agencies. The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services provides a Risk-Tracking Database (Excel spreadsheet) for use by situation tables in Ontario, which consists of 103 risk factors and 26 study flags. The risk factors encompass a wide range of categories, such as addictions (alcohol, drugs, gambling), mental health (suicide, self-harm), physical health, criminal involvement, criminal victimization, violence (emotional, physical, sexual), parenting, truancy, basic needs, housing, poverty, antisocial/negative behaviour, gangs, and more. The study flags include such topics as acquired brain injury, disabilities (cognitive, developmental), domestic violence, fire safety, hoarding, homelessness, human trafficking, homicidal ideation, social media and more.

When the Lanark County Situation Table formed, transportation was frequently mentioned in discussions about referrals as being a tremendous barrier to services in Lanark County and Smiths Falls, however the risk-tracking database did not have a mechanism for recording this at the time. In January, the ministry solicited feedback from operating situation tables regarding additional study flags to be added to the database. Our group submitted the following, which were accepted and are now part of the provincial database:

**Transportation Issues: Insufficient/non-existent access to personal or public transportation in order to allow individual to access services or leave an undesirable situation*

**Geographical isolation: Residing in a remote location with limited access to transportation, services, Internet, neighbours; increased possibility of victimization or self-harm*

Although our database officially shows a lower number of referrals that include these two study flags due to the late addition of the categories (end of January), anecdotally it would be safe to say they have been factors in half of the 39 referrals to date.

Lanark County Situation Table Survey Results:

In March and April of 2016, the Lanark County Situation Table circulated an online survey to its member agencies, other community groups, police services boards and local municipal councils to help gather information for the community plan for safety and well-being. It was requested that the survey be shared widely within agencies to capture responses from front-line workers. The survey was divided into three major sections: agency information, risk factors and barriers/systemic gaps.

Sixty-seven responses were received from various agencies. Question #15 listed a condensed version of the risk factors and study flags the Lanark County Situation Table tracks and asked agencies to identify which "risk factors or local issues you encounter with your clients (check all that apply)." Among the specifically listed issues were "lack of transportation affecting ability to connect to services, employment, school" and "Geographic isolation leading to victimization or self-harm."

Of those who returned the survey, 48 responded to question 15. Of those respondents, 83% indicated transportation was a risk factor or local issue. **Transportation was among the top-ranking issues, along with alcohol abuse, mental health, health-related risks and poverty – all of which were higher than 80%.** Geographic isolation scored 46%.

The survey also asked respondents to “please describe any barriers you have encountered that hinder your ability to fulfill your agency’s mandate (e.g. funding, staff or other limited resources, limited service area/transportation, restrictive mandates, systemic gaps, etc.)” Thirty-six agencies responded to this question and transportation-related comments are below. This is a summary that does not specifically identify the type of agency, but that information could be provided if necessary:

- Funding, limited resources, transportation for a large geographical area. Urban-centric mandates that can be difficult to transfer to rural areas.
- Funding for programming, ability for clients to afford program, transportation and rising costs of food
- Funding, staff, stigma, transportation, gaps in service, lack of local business supports
- Limited funding/resources, limited transportation, inadequate mental health and substance use services, gaps in service
- Funding, transportation, resources
- Transportation
- Demand exceeds our ability to supply, food prices increasing, shortfall of funding, transportation, inadequate social assistance rates, insufficient affordable housing, etc.
- Limited resources in the area. Resources which do not capture the extent of the needs exhibited by our clientele. Transportation issues to resources
- Lack of resources – underfunded, understaffed which means wait lists along with lack of transportation
- No government funding and lack of transportation
- Transportation for youth who do not want to disclose appointments to parents, lack of local offices for service providers, need for after-school access to agencies as without parental consent students cannot be released from school

The survey then asked respondents to “provide suggestions about how, in an ideal world, the barriers you have listed above could be addressed”:

- I would welcome the opportunity to develop partnerships with other agencies in the community to see if Lanark Transportation Association can assist with their transportation needs
- Full funding for youth centres to run much-needed youth programs...transportation to and from events, and programs for youth to attend...resources available to run certain programs on a yearly basis.
- Travel could be addressed, policing initiatives could be increased, health care resources could increase, affordable housing could become more accessible
- By going directly to the person’s place of residence and speaking to them and offering the assistance right then and not putting the person on a waiting list or by giving them the opportunity to decline.

- To remove wait lists and to have accessible transportation
- Perhaps with funding and transportation, we would be able to reach more people with food insecurities in outlying rural areas. We could go to them. Seniors in particular.

Question 26 asked: “Is there a service or services you would like to see in Lanark County and Smiths Falls that you believe is urgently needed and currently lacking?” Thirty-five responses were received. The transportation-related responses are listed below:

- In-patient addiction residence; transportation is an issue, but in reality if one speaks to the proper organization, transportation can be obtained
- Transportation
- Transportation between Carleton Place, Perth, Smiths Falls
- Transportation, youth centre or youth services in community of Almonte outside of school hours.
- Transportation services
- Enough social housing to have a short wait list, more mental health supports, emergency housing, supportive housing, transportation, affordable housing, transportation for non-medical appointments
- More accessible transportation and affordable housing. Specialized medical supports for high-risk children. Access to services to the Aboriginal and Inuit families. Families who are isolated and the service provide does not do home visits but require people to access them.

Agency Feedback:

In the course of the work of the Lanark County Situation Table, a predominant issue for individuals referred that is related to transportation is the fact there is funding available for only certain transportation purposes. Generally speaking, specific medical needs may be covered, but some other social services (e.g. anger management treatment) may not be covered under Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) funds. This is an urgent issue when, for example, an individual who is on probation is required to complete a program.

The ODSP has a directive related to the transportation benefit, and a main complication is around travel to mental health sessions (specifically those led by social workers). ODSP indicates all members of the benefit unit are eligible for this benefit in months they would otherwise be eligible for benefits.

The “Mandatory Special Necessities” directive is copied below with the relevant section **bolded**:

Transportation

Travel and transportation costs are paid when the costs exceed \$15 per benefit unit in a given month, and the travel meets the criteria of one of the three components outlined below. In order to receive transportation costs (except in emergencies) an MSN Benefit Request form must be completed. The approved costs should be based on the most economical mode of transportation that the approved health professional indicates a person’s condition enables him/her to use. There are 3 components in the MSN travel benefit that describe when costs for travel and transportation can be provided.

1. Professionals designated under the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA)

The MSN travel and transportation benefit is available to recipients who incur transportation costs to or from any therapy or treatment provided by a professional designated under the RHPA. The professions governed by the RHPA are: physicians, optometrists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, dentists, dental surgeons, dental technicians, dental hygienists, denturists, opticians, dieticians, medical radiation technologists, massage therapists, midwives, nurses, pharmacists, speech language pathologists, audiologists, medical laboratory technologists, psychologists, respiratory technologists, chiropractors, chiropodists, podiatrists, kinesiologists and practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine.

2. Alcohol and Drug Recovery Groups

The costs of transportation to attend drug and alcohol recovery groups (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous) are covered, provided the recipient's physician or psychologist has prescribed it, and the program is available locally.

3. Mental Health Therapy and Mental Health Counselling

The costs of travel to mental health therapy/mental health counselling is covered provided that the treatment has been prescribed by a psychiatrist, other physician or psychologist and the program is provided under the supervision of a psychiatrist, other physician or psychologist. To "prescribe" a program means that the psychiatrist, other physician or psychologist has provided a clear indication that the program is part of the client's medical treatment or therapy. The program or activity must be under the supervision of a psychiatrist, other physician or psychologist, and

i) The activity or program is administered and adapted to individual participants by qualified mental health caseworkers; and

ii) The mental health caseworkers are supervised by the psychiatrist, other physician or psychologist.

Emergency Travel

Some ODSP recipients may require emergency medical treatment and request reimbursement for transportation expenses that were not approved in advance. Emergency costs can be covered based on receipts. A note from the recipient requesting reimbursement and specifying the destination and the mileage incurred is also acceptable; however, receipts (e.g. parking receipt) should also be included if available. Where the recipient is requesting reimbursement, they should be asked if they will require regular appointments. If so, an MSN request form should be completed by the approved health professional and upfront verification would apply as in all other cases.

ODSP indicates the coverage for sessions such as anger management comes down to who administers the session. ODSP doesn't necessarily have to know what the treatment is, and often sessions are administered through Lanark County Mental Health and run by social workers. In those cases, ODSP asks the client to get their health care professional (doctor or psychiatrist, etc.) to send a letter to ODSP detailing they have prescribed this treatment and will supervise the treatment and

progress. At times, clients will request transportation to peer-led support groups. Those sessions are not covered, nor are such things as trips to the ODSP or Ontario Works offices or to and from parole meetings. Depending on the situation, this could result in a breach for a client.

To approve the transportation, ODSP requires a form on file with the following information: health care professional's name, location, phone number, number of trips required per month, required from date, required until date. If the form indicates, for example, "Dr. X at 99 Christie Lake Road three times per month," then the client is eligible to go to that location three times a month. The client provides verification he/she attended the appointment and ODSP reimburses the cost (\$0.18/km for self-driven or payment paid directly to a transportation company). If the form comes back and it says, "Jane Doe at 99 Christie Lake Road three times per month," then ODSP follows up with the client to determine what that appointment is and who is administering it. If it turns out it's not a regulated health-care professional (most often it's a social worker-led group), ODSP indicates what the client needs from the doctor.

Another Situation Table agency participant, Lanark Leeds Grenville Addiction and Mental Health, indicates management has been working on the issue of transportation barriers for rural clients. Information on the issue was compiled by one of the counsellors for Leeds and Grenville, and as the agency expands services in Lanark County it is examining the issue here. The counsellor indicated the following:

For my 2 cents worth, and from my own personal point of view, I have always been extremely frustrated by the fact that we as taxpayers are already paying for a comprehensive rural transportation system, called school buses. When I first starting driving it was permitted for parents to come in on the bus if they were volunteering at the school. My observation was that this led to several positive benefits in terms of pro social involvement, reduction of isolation, as well as better behaviour of the kids on the bus. It would certainly be an ideal way for women to get out of abusive situations and, if we think about it, schools are located in the same centres as the services such as medical, shopping, dental, counselling, etc., that our isolated and vulnerable clients have trouble accessing...the objection has always been actuarial (i.e.: insurance) but the reality is that schoolchildren ride public transit in every urban centre all over the world.

A probation officer with Lanark County Probation and Parole highlights transportation as a "huge" barrier:

We offer groups in Smiths Falls for addictions, anger management and anti-criminal thinking, which are once a week for six weeks in a row, and it is VERY difficult for us to get a full group because of transportation. It interferes with reporting, the Partner Assault Response program, and counselling appointments at Tri-County Addictions (Lanark Leeds and Grenville Addictions and Mental Health). It has historically been and is presently one of the biggest issues around compliance.

Contact information for the agencies above can be provided upon request.

CONCLUSION

Without question, transportation has been deemed a significant issue from the Lanark County Situation Table perspective. When dealing with clients who may already be resistant to accepting help, having the transportation barrier as an additional consideration impedes individuals further and may prevent them from receiving appropriate supports in a timely manner.

Recognizing that this study will be considering existing assets and a variety of transportation possibilities, there are some considerations to be made in certain circumstances as well. If a system is established that uses, for example, vans with drivers, consideration may have to be given to appropriate training and/or additional supervision for certain high-needs clients (safety for both the driver and the client and other passengers). As well, the concept of bringing more services to clients could be explored, however, there may be limitations in terms of financial circumstances and geographic isolation (Internet access) if one of the solutions is, for example, to conduct counselling sessions via Skype or some other method. More research will need to be done to determine if this method is already being used by any local agencies and whether it is feasible.

The Lanark County Situation Table would be pleased to provide additional feedback and to participate in further collaboration as this transportation study moves forward given the fact it has been identified by surveyed partner agencies as one of the top four issues facing individuals who are at risk.

Appendix E: Commuting to Work Flow Chart

COMMUTING FLOW 2011 NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY		
Residence	Place of Work	Total
Beckwith	Ottawa	1,495
Beckwith	Carleton Place	905
Beckwith	Smiths Falls	165
Beckwith	Perth	145
Beckwith	Mississippi Mills	145
Beckwith	Gatineau	40
Beckwith Total		2,895
Carleton Place	Ottawa	2,115
Carleton Place	Carleton Place	1,505
Carleton Place	Mississippi Mills	145
Carleton Place	Smiths Falls	100
Carleton Place	Gatineau	50
Carleton Place	Perth	45
Carleton Place	Arnprior	20
Carleton Place Total		3,980
Drummond/North Elmsley		n/a
Lanark Highlands		n/a
Mississippi Mills	Ottawa	2,640
Mississippi Mills	Mississippi Mills	1,050
Mississippi Mills	Carleton Place	785
Mississippi Mills	Arnprior	300
Mississippi Mills	Gatineau	85
Mississippi Mills	Perth	75
Mississippi Mills	Renfrew	70
Mississippi Mills	Smiths Falls	40
Mississippi Mills Total		5,045

Residence	Place of Work	Total
Montague	Smiths Falls	730
Montague	Ottawa	465
Montague	Perth	125
Montague	Carleton Place	70
Montague	Merrickville-Wolford	50
Montague	Brockville	45
Montague	North Grenville	25
Montague	Kingston	20
Montague Total		1,530
Perth	Perth	1,395
Perth	Ottawa	220
Perth	Smiths Falls	190
Perth	Carleton Place	50
Perth	Toronto	40
Perth Total		1,895
Tay Valley		n/a
Smiths Falls	Smiths Falls	1,935
Smiths Falls	Ottawa	525
Smiths Falls	Perth	215
Smiths Falls	Brockville	120
Smiths Falls	Merrickville-Wolford	85
Smiths Falls	Carleton Place	60
Smiths Falls	Mississippi Mills	30
Smiths Falls	Kingston	30
Smiths Falls	North Grenville	25
Smiths Falls Total		3,025
Data Sources:		
Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey: Data tables 99-012-X2011032		
Tabulation: Commuting Flow - Census Subdivisions: Employed Labour Force Aged 15 Years and Over Having a Usual Place of Work, Flows Greater than or Equal to 20.		

Appendix F: Community-Based Rideshare Program Proposal

Executive Summary

Ridesharing, a program whereby drivers and passengers are able to connect with one another to ride together, is increasing in popularity world-wide because of the many benefits it provides. A not-for-profit, locally-based rideshare program, which we are proposing, costs little to start and maintain, while enabling our municipality to improve the ability of residents, many of whom live at some distance from shops and services and places of work, to get around at little cost. At the same time ridesharing reduces environmental pollution and the pressure to add roads and parking lots. Furthermore, a ridesharing program is a logical extension of the numerous other environmental initiatives for which Mississippi Mills is becoming recognized.

Concerns that people may have about sharing transportation, such as questions about behaviour and safety, have been addressed. Our rideshare program incorporates a code of conduct, as well as a checklist to rate the conduct of both drivers and passengers, which are readily available to anyone using the program. There is also the question of convenience. Although it is expected, when the program is first implemented, that there may not be a large number of rides at suitable times and to suitable locations, this problem should become less of an issue as the program increases in popularity.

This program was researched and designed locally, and incorporates several features of rideshare programs used by municipalities with similar needs to ours. Because a program like this requires credibility and continuity to really be effective, we are requesting that a corporate entity such as yours, take ownership of our program.

Definition of rideshare

Ridesharing functions like an electronic bulletin board for drivers and passengers.

Drivers post rides, and passengers can browse the available rides and book one or more rides. Simply put, it connects drivers with passengers. Rides can be posted on a casual basis or as a one-time offer; or rides can be made available on a regular, recurring basis; e.g., every work day.

Our rideshare program is not a unique solution; there are many well-established rideshare programs available; e.g., [KangaRide](#), [Carpoolworld](#), [Kootenayrideshare](#) (You can click on the preceding links for examples.) What we offer is a program focused on the needs of the Mississippi Mills community. We specifically are not providing a commercial offering that is deployed nationally. We strive to provide value to our local users with close-to-zero overhead costs.

As you can see, if you click on this [link](#), the program we have designed is almost ready to implement, once it has been adapted to include the end-user's desired features. Please note, also, how our ridesharing program makes it easy for drivers to post their rides and

for passengers to search for rides. Users can search for rides based on differing criteria; e.g., search by departure location, search by time of departure or arrival, etc.

Many rideshare programs use advertising. Our objective is to provide a non-commercial offering, but we will offer simple banner ads for local businesses that align with our community-based objectives; for example, businesses building “green” products.

Advantages of ridesharing

- Reduces the number of single-occupancy cars on the road and aligns with the province’s initiative to build High Occupancy Lanes;
- Reduces smog, congestion and fuel consumption;
- Reduces pressure on the municipality to build additional roads and parking spaces;
- Aggregates the existing informal ridesharing into a centralized offering;
- Provides, as a result of centralization, accurate and reliable metrics, which are essential for our municipality’s future “park and ride” facility;
- Avoids the unintended consequence of people parking on private property during the working day that results from the current informal and fragmented ridesharing operating in our community; e.g., Facebook. A centralized rideshare provides the infrastructure to enable efficient use of the municipality's future park and ride. It aligns with the policies at all three levels of government; as [this link](#) shows, Transport Canada is attempting to encourage ridesharing.
- Creates a positive image for the municipality as being environmentally aware, and builds on the brand of the municipality as an environmental trend-setter;
- Provides a low-cost option that improves mobility for people not able to drive or with financial constraints;
- Increases social interaction: we have learned from discussions with Kootenay Rideshare that most of their users are seniors, who find that ridesharing helps alleviate their isolation. The age distribution and population density of Kootenay's users are similar to ours.
- Creates opportunities for increasing social capital;
- Requires minimal funding. The project is not capital intensive, and can be implemented and maintained for less than \$300 per year.

Disadvantages of ridesharing

- Ridesharing is not as convenient as a regularly scheduled bus service, and rides may not be available at the desired time, or to the desired location. However, as this program becomes more popular, we anticipate that availability of suitable rides and destinations will improve.
- Initially, both the driver and the passenger are strangers, and problems may arise. To address these problems, our ridesharing program, like many other internet products, uses a system of ratings by users to identify and report any violations of our code of conduct. In other words, it is a self-policing program. Furthermore, in our small community we believe that our network of users will grow to know one other and select passengers or drivers that they already know. Finally, to ensure a courteous and

respectful environment, all users must agree to our Code of Conduct, which is similar to what is found in other ridesharing programs.

- There can be the risk of no-shows. The user rating system should eliminate this problem. Persistent no-shows will be banned for one year (a similar remedy is used by KangaRide).

Resources used

Prior to developing the software, we performed an internet search of various rideshare offerings available in North America. We evaluated Kootenay Rideshare, KangaRide and CarpoolWorld. We took the best features from these products, and customized them for our local community. We focused our efforts on Kootenay Rideshare because it is Canadian, it is deployed in a similar community to ours, and it is non-profit. Our phone calls to Kootenay provided much useful information about their user base.

The technology used for development is standard off-the-shelf tools. This makes it easier to find local resources to maintain the product. The existing product was built with two person-months of development effort (provided on a volunteer basis). It is built using licence-free software; this means no ongoing licensing fees for the software.

Costs

Because of the huge advances in computer technology, people now have access to a huge range of communication methods at minimal cost. For example, a modern, fully functioning cloud-based system, which our rideshare program uses, can be operated at little expense, and without requiring a team of trained staff to maintain it.

The initial minimal costs required to set up the ridesharing website were funded by Sustainable Eastern Ontario. The annual financial requirements for running the program range from a minimum of \$120 per year to a maximum of \$250 per year. The cost varies, depending on which company we select for our cloud services and the on the number of people that use the product.

Assuming no additional features are to be added, there will be no additional ongoing maintenance costs. The program is self-administered.

Operation and administration

Continuity of management

The current initiative is the result of two Mississippi Mills residents with a desire to make our municipality more environmentally friendly. Ideally, this will be a long-lived project; continuity is essential for building credibility over the time. We believe that continuity and credibility are best supplied by an established organization, as opposed to two private individuals.

We purposely built the software with non-proprietary technology. The skills needed to maintain the product are mainstream, based on Microsoft technology, probably the most ubiquitous software environment. This means that it is easy to find people to maintain the product. In other words, any corporate entity that takes ownership is not tied to the people that developed the product.

Spin-off benefits for corporate adopter

This product can be used as a springboard to strengthen the ties of the corporate entity that adopts it for the clients they serve. Enabling people to use the rideshare program facilitates an ongoing dialogue with those clients since it can be used to display additional information; e.g., workshops on nutrition, housing, or medical support.

The rideshare software has the built-in infrastructure for expansion. It has a modern database; it is cloud-based and can support thousands of users; it is usable on mobile devices; and it is built with standardized software. It has all the technologies required for the administration of social services by a medium-size corporate entity. These sets of tools provide a low-risk, incremental migration path from a labour-intensive, paper-based administration program to a computerized modern-day administration, at low cost. For all the above-stated reasons, optimal implementation of this rideshare program is best realized by a corporate entity.

Our Commitment

We will provide free ongoing support for the rideshare program for at least one year. In addition, if the adopting corporate entity decides to implement part or all of the capabilities of the product, we will provide consulting services to define a migration plan, at no cost. Because most of the work involved has already been done, this rideshare program can be completed, depending on the number of features requested by the corporate entity, in as little time as one month from the initial date of the contract.

Conclusion

As we know, Mississippi Mills has a well-developed social network of volunteers and organizations actively involved in community projects. A not-for-profit, community-based ridesharing program is one more way of building on our sense of community to improve the ability of people to travel within and outside our vast municipality (520 km²) with its low population density (12,500 residents), regardless of their income level and physical abilities. In addition to the social benefits, ridesharing results in less environmental pollution and less pressure to expand transportation infrastructure, thereby improving our quality of life.

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