

Town staff request funds to phase in public transit system

Written By JOSHUA SANTOS

Town of Caledon administration have asked for more funding to phase in a transit system in the community.

The latest proposed budget notes a proposal for council to approve \$320,000 for the program but have not stated where, specifically, the money will go towards.

?The Town is completing the Transit Feasibility Study and staff will report findings and recommendations to Council in the first quarter of 2019, said Fuwing Wong, general manager of finance and infrastructure services and chief financial officer.

?In the 2019 budget, staff is recommending \$320,000 be allocated to implement expanded public transit services in 2019. Specifics related to public transit services will be outlined in an implementation plan in the Transit Feasibility Study report in 2019.?

This follows a further report where the provincial government announced they will provide \$364 million in gas tax funding to 107 municipalities across Ontario to invest in public transit. The gas tax funding is required to be used on existing public transit services, improving accessibility, transit infrastructure and transit vehicles. Peel Region will receive \$774,606 for public transit, according to a provincial government news release.

The study Wong mentioned will investigate the benefits and costs of providing public transit services within the town of Caledon, to help meet the current and future needs of residents, workers, visitors and employers, according to the Town website.

It will be developed and then guided by a set of vision, goals and objectives that are consistent with the Town's wider plans.

The study includes coverage, frequency, span, connectivity and reliability. A graphic notes two options, a corridor-focused system, presumably going down major roads and intersections such as Highway 50 and Highway 10 and a wide spread option going down streets and into neighbourhoods.

A corridor-focused initiative does not cover much of the town, has a longer walking distance and provides service during peak periods from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. There is, however, a half hour waiting time.

The wide-spread option on the other hand has a wider coverage area, a short walking distance, supplies service during 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. but does have a one hour waiting time.

A town memo states Caledon has a fast growing and aging population with a 2021 population surpassing 80,000 people and a 2031 forecast exceeding 100,000, near 110,000.

Further, 50 per cent of the population is 45-years-old or above, with the majority of residents about 50 to 54 years old.

At this time, GO Transit operates three routes, both with GO train connections. Route 37, Orangeville to Brampton via Highway 10 runs on peak hours, route 38, Bolton to Malton runs all day and route 38A Bolton to North York runs during peak times.

Brampton Transit operates four buses in town and one in Caledon. 30 Airport Rd. to Tullamore runs all day, 7 Kennedy operates all day, 24 Van Kirk runs during peak periods, 15/15A Bramalea runs all day and 31 MacVean operates all day.

Caledon Community Services provides door-to-door service seven days a week to seniors and citizens with short term or long-term disabilities.

Trans help operates a transit service for people with disabilities across Peel Region.

Existing travel patterns show transit users hop on a bus mostly for educational purposes, around 7:45 a.m. and around 3 p.m.

Nearly half of all trips are within Caledon. A graph shows that 47 per cent of Caledonians travel within town, 17 per cent attend other areas and 16 per cent go to Brampton.

Most people, however work outside of Caledon. About 29% per cent work in town, 18 per cent work in Toronto and 16 per cent work in Brampton.

A survey notes around 99 per cent of Caledon households have a car, 21 per cent of respondents likely to use transit within town and 27 per cent are likely to use transit between Caledon and other areas, noting that 40 per cent of these potential transit riders would use it for work trips.

The study will examine those existing and projected demographics and travel patterns within Caledon and review a transit provision in similar municipalities.