

1.0 STUDY BACKGROUND & INFORMATION

In the spring of 2010, the Corporation of the County of Huron retained the MMM Group to develop a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan and Strategy to address the unique transportation needs for the County and its local area municipalities. In addition to the TDM strategy developed for the County, outreach, leadership, marketing, partnership, implementation and maintenance strategies and approaches have also been developed for consideration when implementing the Plan and its proposed initiatives. The preparation of this Plan was one of the key initiatives identified by the County's Transportation Task Force, which recently completed their assessment of transportation opportunities and needs throughout the County.

The purpose of the plan was to assess the travel needs of residents with the objective of identifying a suite of services, programs and delivery models that could respond to these needs and reduce the daily kilometers traveled by single-occupant vehicles by encouraging alternative travel modes. An analysis of the existing TDM related conditions within the County of Huron as well as the proposed TDM recommendations, pilot programs and initiatives will be outlined in further detail in Chapters 2 and 3 of the study.

The following sections provide an overall understanding of what Transportation Demand Management is, the benefits of implementing TDM programming and initiatives as well as existing case studies throughout Canada and a detailed documentation of the current state of TDM in the County of Huron.

1.1 What is Transportation Demand Management?

In order to create a greater understanding of what the County wishes to achieve, the following sections provide detailed information on the definition of TDM, and ways in which to successfully implement such programs. The existing conditions of transportation, demographics and geography throughout the County are discussed in detail. In addition, examples of Best TDM Practices throughout Canada and internationally are provided. These have provided a base knowledge and understanding of the potential success of TDM programs and initiatives throughout Huron County.

1.1.1 Definition

By definition, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is a multi-faceted and multi modal approach used to reduce or redistribute transportation demand. This increases the efficiency and use of the available transportation infrastructure, through the implementation of strategies which influence travel behaviour and reduce reliance on the single-occupant vehicle.

In many situations these goals can be accomplished by encouraging a shift in travel mode to carpooling or active transportation which will facilitate a reduction in vehicle trips. This can also be achieved through telework, the use of shuttle services and coordinated shuttle programs, online shopping or electronic communication, or encouraging more efficient driving through shopping locally, trip chaining, and scheduling trips outside of peak travel periods. Key elements of TDM plans are promotion and outreach, travel incentives and disincentives, better travel options and partnership options; these need to be supported by education, outreach, and investment strategies as well as potential performance measures to maximize the success of the program.

1.1.2 Benefits of TDM

There are a number of benefits to the County that can be achieved through the implementation of a TDM strategy. These can be categorized into three different areas, community, business and visitor benefits. The potential benefits associated with each are as follows:

Community Benefits

- Increased individual as well as community cost saving;
- Increased community health by removing people from their cars to explore the neighbourhood and community;
- Decreased stress levels due to less congestion and exposure to traffic;
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, resulting in a healthier environment; and
- Fewer cars on the roads and decreased maintenance costs prolonging the life of the road network and increasing the efficiency of the use of infrastructure.

Business Benefits

- Reduced employee stress levels with increased use of alternative transportation modes;
- Fewer drivers leads to fewer parking spaces required due to a decrease in the number of people parking;
- Increased number of community leader involvement and positive publicity in TDM as companies implement TDM strategies; and
- The ability to attract new employees by implementing TDM initiatives to attract new hires and generate a competitive advantage.

Visitor Benefits

- The enjoyment of a pedestrian-friendly environment with a walkable community;

- Increased parking availability due to less parking taken up by employees and residents; and
- Facilitating a more welcoming and stronger sense of community through increased interaction with residents as well as tourists.

In addition to the general benefits outlined above, there are also specific benefits to the County of Huron which can be achieved through the implementation of the proposed TDM initiatives and programming. These include but are not limited to:

- Improved mobility for the aging population;
- Improved health for residents by cycling or walking for recreational and utilitarian purposes;
- Energy conservation based on reduced reliance on cars and oil;
- Improved mobility for youth, low income population and non-drivers;
- More pedestrian, cycling and transit-oriented neighbourhoods;
- Decreased number of single occupant vehicles on the road;
- Increased connectivity between municipal and throughout the County;
- Improved accessibility and options for those with disabilities; and
- The creation of more sustainable transportation options.

Each of the benefits identified are instrumental in increasing the liveability of the County and its local municipalities. Creating more liveable communities will have additional downstream benefits – it will assist in retention of young professionals, and increased attractiveness will assist in generating additional commercial activity from tourism.

1.1.3 TDM Strategies across Canada

The concept of public transit and transportation demand management in small and rural communities is markedly different than in larger urban centres. Individuals in these communities have much different travel needs, and because of the absence of large and concentrated populated areas traditional approaches to public transit and transportation demand management are not appropriate, practical, or economically feasible. Also, in rural areas non-drivers can experience significant isolation because these areas are highly automobile dependent. Strategies that improve affordable transportation options for non-drivers can provide significant benefits in the community.

Due to the low population densities in communities like Huron County, most trips are made by the private automobile and there is a relatively low demand for alternate modes of transportation such as ridesharing and transit. Through the Transportation Task Force, Huron County has expressed a desire for more sustainable forms of transportation, as well as greater accessibility for the residents of the County.

In order to begin to develop strategies and policies relating to transportation demand management in Huron County, a high level best practices review of policy development and select case studies was conducted. **Table 1-1** presents a set of best practice case studies that have been identified. These case studies contributed to the development of potential programs and themes and will contribute to the development of the Transportation Demand Management Program.

Table 1-1: Best Practices Inventory

Rural Transportation Project	Project Location	Project Type	Description
Rabbit Transit http://www.rabbittransit.org/	York, Pennsylvania	Rural Transit Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed partnerships with local employers • Established shuttle routes for employees and members of the public
OC Transpo http://www.octranspo1.com/splash	City of Ottawa (Post Amalgamation)	Rural Transit Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight transit routes that services twelve small communities with total population of 84,500 • Routes operate in peak hours, with some routes averaging ridership as small as 35 riders • Rural express bus passes offered • Developed partnerships with local bus companies and other municipalities to offer rural partner routes
Metrolinx-Smart Commute http://www.smartcommute.ca/en/home	Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA)	Transportation Demand Management Coordination Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart Commute became a program of Metrolinx (an agency of the Government of Ontario), with support of local municipalities on January 1, 2008. • Metrolinx initiative which helps local employers and commuters explore different commute choices like

Rural Transportation Project	Project Location	Project Type	Description
			<p>carpooling, cycling and transit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carpooling and vanpooling: exclusive ridematching programs for employers; • Site assessments and surveys to understand employee commute behaviour; • Shuttle programs; • Emergency Ride Programs; • Employee work arrangement solutions: telework, compressed work weeks and flex hours, workshops, lunch and learns and seminars; and • Clean Air Commute and other fun events.
	Halifax Regional Municipality	Shuttle Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizes a group of local commuters who live on a common route with similar work hours • Shuttles also travel to university campuses and medical facilities
Vertigogo	Val-Morin Quebec	Ride Matching Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Program is a web-based ride matching service that matches people going to the same place from the same place with rides
Co-Operative Auto Network (CAN) http://www.cooperativeauto.net/	Greater Vancouver Regional District	Car Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program offers automobile sharing for 19 communities with the smallest being 2,000 residents • Since 2007, up to 50% of people who have joined the program sold or donated their car.
Roaring Fork Transportation Authority http://www.rfta.com/	Colorado, United States (first rural transportation authority)	Active Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transportation authority purchased defunct rail lines

Rural Transportation Project	Project Location	Project Type	Description
			and transformed them into recreational trails. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 53km of continuous trail that is completely protected from traffic.
Whistler and Valley Express (WAVE) http://www.busonline.ca/regions/whi/	Whistler, British Columbia	Tourism Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A local transit service that provides free shuttles throughout the tourist areas

1.2 Transportation Demand Management in Huron County

It is important to have a detailed understanding of the geographic, demographic, social and economic understanding of the County prior to developing an effective TDM strategy. The following is an excerpt from the Background Information report developed in Phase 1 of the Study, a copy of the Background Information Report can be found in **Appendix A**. This information was used as a base to develop the proposed TDM initiatives, pilot programs and recommendations specific to the needs of Huron County residents and visitors.

Huron County is located in south-western Ontario, on the shoreline of Lake Huron and covers approximately 3,397km². In 2006, the population of Huron County was 59,325 with an expected increase of 15% by 2031, bringing the population to approximately 68,500 residents. The County is subdivided into nine municipalities and townships, they are as follows:

- Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh (Formerly Ashfield, West Wawanosh & Colborne)
- Bluewater (Formerly Bayfield, Stanley, Hensall, Zurich & Hay)
- Central Huron (Formerly Goderich Township Clinton & Hullet)
- Howick
- Town of Goderich
- Huron East (Formerly Brussels, Grey, Seaforth, Tuckersmith & Mckillop)
- Morris-Turnberry (Formerly Morris & Turnberry)
- North Huron (Formerly East Wawanosh, Wingham & Blyth)
- South Huron (Formerly Exeter, Usborne & Stephen).

The surrounding areas of Huron County include; Perth County, Wellington County, Middlesex-London, Lambton County and Grey-Bruce. Huron County is the second largest geographical region in south-western Ontario at approximately 100 km long from north to south and 50 km wide from east to west. **Figure 1.1** illustrates the location of Huron County as well as the nine municipalities and townships.

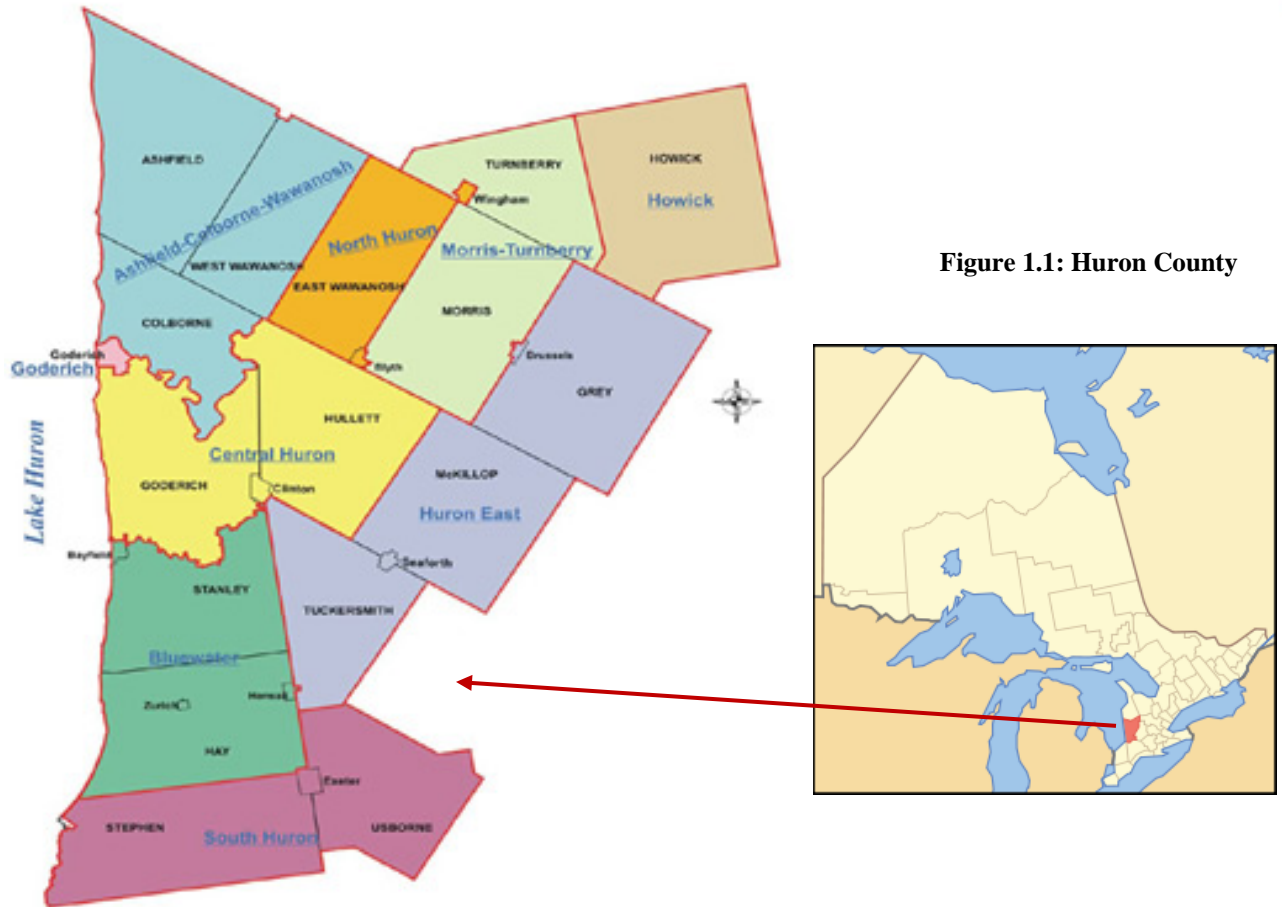
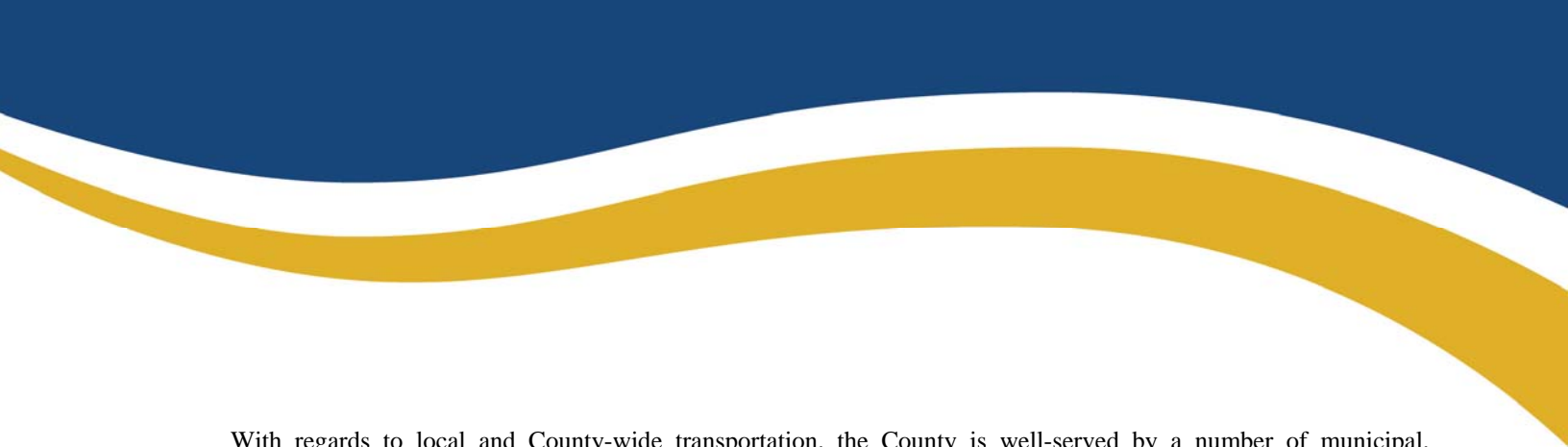


Figure 1.1: Huron County

The economy of Huron County is largely based primarily on agriculture and mining¹, which comprises 35% of all businesses. Additional sectors include personal, business (e.g. manufacturing) and other services as well as retail and wholesale. Huron County has over 3000 kilometres of roads, 110 kilometres of railway, 150 kilometres of marked trails and three local airports. The majority of trips made in Huron County are in a single-occupant vehicle; including 80% of trips to work. Additionally, the majority of children in the County are either bussed or driven to school due to an inability to walk because of long distances. Obesity is more prevalent than in other counties in Ontario, and heart disease is the primary cause of death among residents, which may be linked partly to a lack of active transportation infrastructure and health promotion outreach initiatives because of the distance between communities in Huron County.

¹ "Statistics Canada Business Patterns Data." *Statistics Canada*. Spring 2010. Web. May 2010. <<http://www.statscan.gc.ca>>.



With regards to local and County-wide transportation, the County is well-served by a number of municipal, provincial and county highways. Three provincial highways provide transport service to larger municipal areas in Ontario and in the United States, as well as connections to Highway 401 and 402. Below are details with regards to alternative modes of transportation such as shuttle, taxi, air, rail, water, active transportation and recreation currently available throughout the County of Huron.

1.2.1 Public Transit

Based on a recent initiative spearheaded by the Town of Goderich effective July 30, 2010, there is now a public charter bus service. After much discussion, collaboration and coordination with Aboutown Transportation Ltd. and the Ministry of Transportation, a license was obtained to operate a public bus service from Goderich to London, Stratford and Kitchener and points in between. Within the Town of Goderich, the bus depot is located at Coffee Culture at 58 Courthouse Square at the corner of Courthouse Square and Montreal Street.

1.2.2 Active Transportation

The Huron Tourism Association identified 23 recreational trails throughout the County in its Hiking Guide. Many of them are loops within conservation land but some run through, start/end or exist within various urban areas. Some of the trails, such as the Goderich Waterfront Boardwalk, do not permit cycling, while others, like the Maitland Trail and Goderich to Auburn Trail do.

In 2009, the County developed both a Hiking Guide and a Cycling Guide for trail use throughout the County. The Hiking Guide illustrates and provides details for each of the trail systems and also provides user information. Information provided includes the difficulty level of the trails, the types of trails, points of interest, as well as a user's code for necessary and appropriate use of the trails system. It is important to include this type of information to potential or frequent trail users to inform them of potential issues that may arise and how to appropriately conduct themselves while using these facilities. Typical information included for each of the trails includes the distance, difficulty level, trail use, hazards and surface as well as the cost associated with using the trail as well as directions to the access point. The Cycling Guide has fewer details but still provides users with a map of the key cycling routes, local circuits as well as the necessary safety precautions and etiquette when cycling throughout the County. Both guides provide a strong foundation to build upon to develop an active transportation network strategy for Huron County.

1.2.3 Taxis / Shuttle

Taxis

The Huron Transportation Task Force Report (2008) identified a total of nine taxi companies providing service to various parts or all of Huron County depending on the company. Of the nine companies, one (Huron Taxi) operates 24 hours, but only serves Clinton and its surrounding area. Another two companies (Star Taxi and Goderich Taxi) operate county-wide, 6:30 AM to 11:00 PM, Sunday through Thursday, extending their hours to 1:30 AM on weekends. Exeter Taxi serves the urban area of Exeter and operates from 7:00 AM to midnight Mondays through Thursdays, extending hours until 3:00 AM on weekends, and reducing hours on Sunday to 10:00 AM to midnight. B&B Taxi operates in Goderich from 6:45 AM to midnight, Mondays through Thursdays, extending its hours to 2:00 or 3:00 AM on weekends. Finally, A1 Taxi operates within Huron County and outside the County's boundaries, making trips as far as Toronto between the hours of 7:00 AM (6:00 AM in St. Mary's) to midnight Mondays through Thursdays, extending its hours to 2:00 or 3:00 on weekends.

Charter Bus Service

Abouttown is a privately-owned transportation company whose Northlink (NL) service provides a variety of interregional passenger and parcel bus service throughout Huron County and the surrounding area. The NL Route #1 offers service on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday's from Owen Sound to London, making several stops along the way, including Wingham, Blyth, Clinton, Hensall and Exeter. In London, passengers can access Greyhound Bus services. Fares range from \$13.50 to \$51.00 depending on the passenger's destination. The NL Route #3 offers service on Thursdays from Wingham to Stratford. Fares range from \$11.50 to \$27.25, depending on the passenger's destination. The NL Route #9 offers service on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday from Stratford to Goderich, making stops in Seaforth and Clinton. Fares range from \$15 to \$27 depending on the passenger's destination.

EasyRide

EasyRide is a reservation-based transportation service funded by the South West Local Health Integration Unit (LHIN) and provided by seven community agencies throughout Huron and primarily Perth Counties. The service provides regional transportation for seniors, citizens with disabilities and others that qualify for transportation assistance. EasyRide clients use a central dispatching office to best utilize each of the seven community agencies vehicles and drivers. Prices vary depending on whether the trip is in-town or out-of-town. The seven agencies that provide the service are Stratford Meals on Wheels and Neighbourly Services, Community Outreach and Perth East Transportation, Midwestern Adult Day Services, Mitchell and Area Community Outreach and Mobility Bus, St.

Mary's and Area Home Support Services, St. Mary's and Area Mobility Services, Town and Country Support Services – Huron County, and VON (Victorian Order of Nurses) Perth-Huron.

A more detailed review of the EasyRide service was completed in October 2010 by Dillon Consulting². The report contains detailed information regarding the existing services provided, an assessment of the need and demand for such services within the community as well as potential future initiatives which can be undertaken throughout Huron and Perth County to expand the EasyRide services. Please see **Appendix B** for the full report and findings.

1.2.4 Rail, Water and Air Services

Rail

The County is currently serviced by a freight railway; the Goderich-Exeter Railway Company. The Railway Company is headquartered in Goderich and provides direct access to the provincial east-west railway corridor. The railway provides freight services to local industries in Huron County; however it does not provide passenger railway connections. In order to access passenger rail service from Via Rail, one must travel to Kitchener, Stratford or London.

Water


The Harbour is owned by the Town of Goderich and operated by the Goderich Port Management Corporation, an organization which consists of harbour users. The Harbour is the only industrial depth deep water port in the Great Lake – St. Lawrence Seaway on the east shore of Lake Huron. The Port is open nine months of the year and can accommodate ocean vessels up to 222 meters in length. The port serves a variety of processing industries including grain, salt, chemical and agricultural; the wharf has a capacity to handle 200 million tonnes of grain and salt annually³. Recently, the harbour underwent a dredging and docking facility project worth \$17 million.

Air

Huron County has three airports; the Wingham Airport is owned and operated by the Township of North Huron with a paved runway and terminal facility. The Goderich Municipal Sky Harbour Airport is owned and operated by the Town of Goderich and is located along Lake Huron. This airport has one paved and one grassed runway and no

² Dillon Consulting Limited, and EasyRide in Huron County. *Assessment of Community Transportation Service Expansion in Huron County Final Report*. Rep. October 2010. Print.

³ The Corporation of the County of Huron. *Take Action for Sustainable Huron*. Rep. Huron County, January 2009. Print.



terminal facilities. Both of these airports can handle flights up to 15 people (passengers and crew). Centralia Airport is located west of Exeter and has two paved runways. At this point in time, however, there are no scheduled flights at any of the airports in Huron County. Any chartered flights, must be arranged through outside airports such as those located in Kincardine, London or Toronto. Toronto and London are the international airports in close proximity to Huron County.