

APPENDIX A

WALKING, BICYCLING, AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



D16-010-76





TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Background Information Report (Draft)



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Final Report (October 2010)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2010, the Corporation of the Huron County retained the MMM Group to develop a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan. TDM is an approach to managing transportation demand by supporting cycling, walking, transit, carpooling and other travel modes and strategies as viable alternatives. TDM introduces incentives and disincentives to reduce reliance on the single-occupant vehicle.

The first step in developing a TDM Plan is to review and summarize existing conditions and background information. This document serves as the Background Report for the TDM Plan, providing a description of existing transportation conditions in Huron County.

2.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS, POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

2.1 DEMOGRAPHICS AND EMPLOYMENT

The following section provides an overview of the geography, demographics and employment in Huron County. The baseline conditions and background details provide important information that will help with the identification of potential transportation demand management strategies and policies under consideration for Huron County.

2.1.1 Geography

Huron County is located in southwestern Ontario, on the shoreline of Lake Huron and covers approximately 3,397km². 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, Grey-Bruce and Windsor Essex. Huron County is the second largest geographical region in southwestern Ontario at approximately 60 miles long from north to south and 30 miles wide from east to west. **Figure 2-1** illustrates the location of Huron County as well as the nine municipalities and townships.

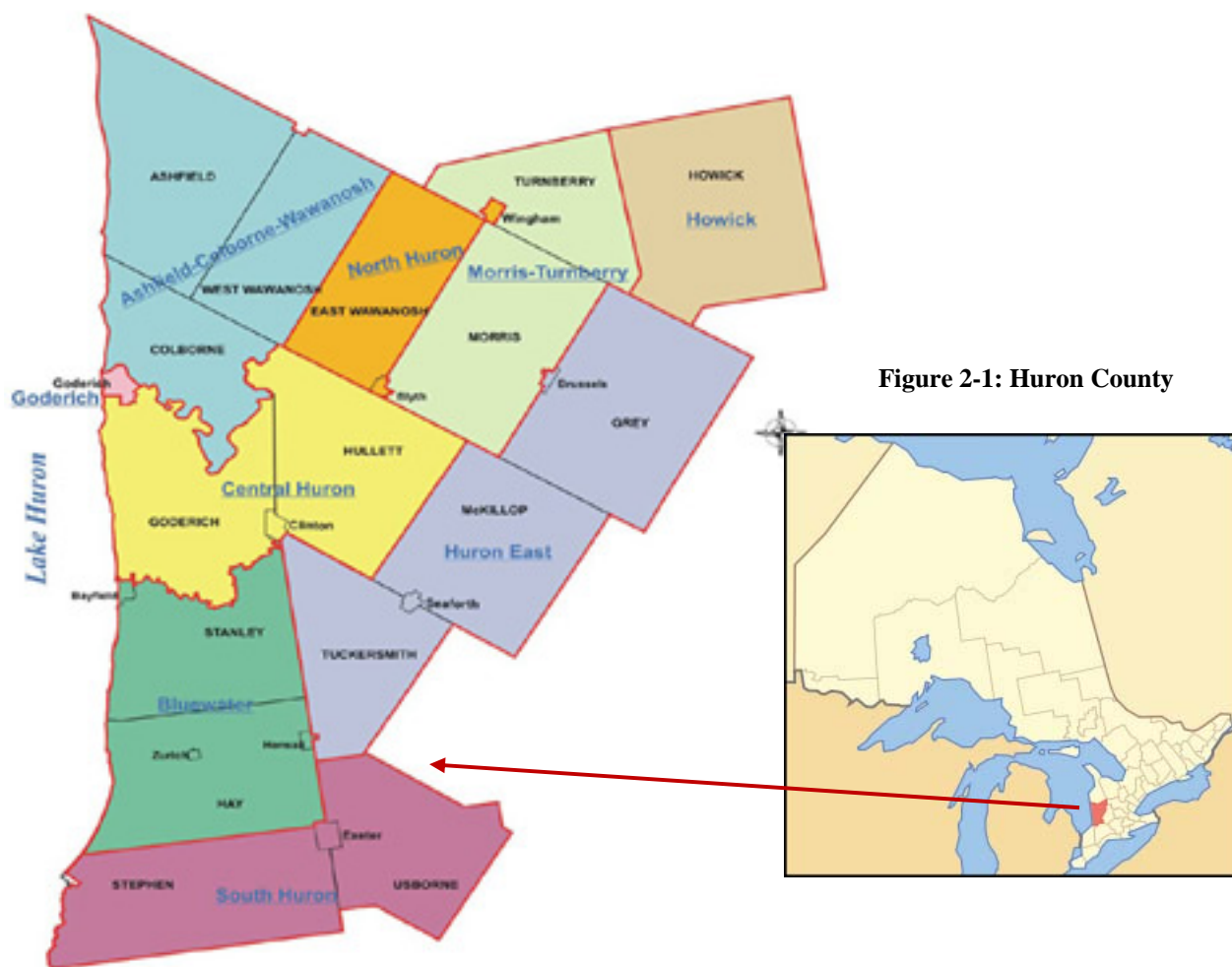


Figure 2-1: Huron County

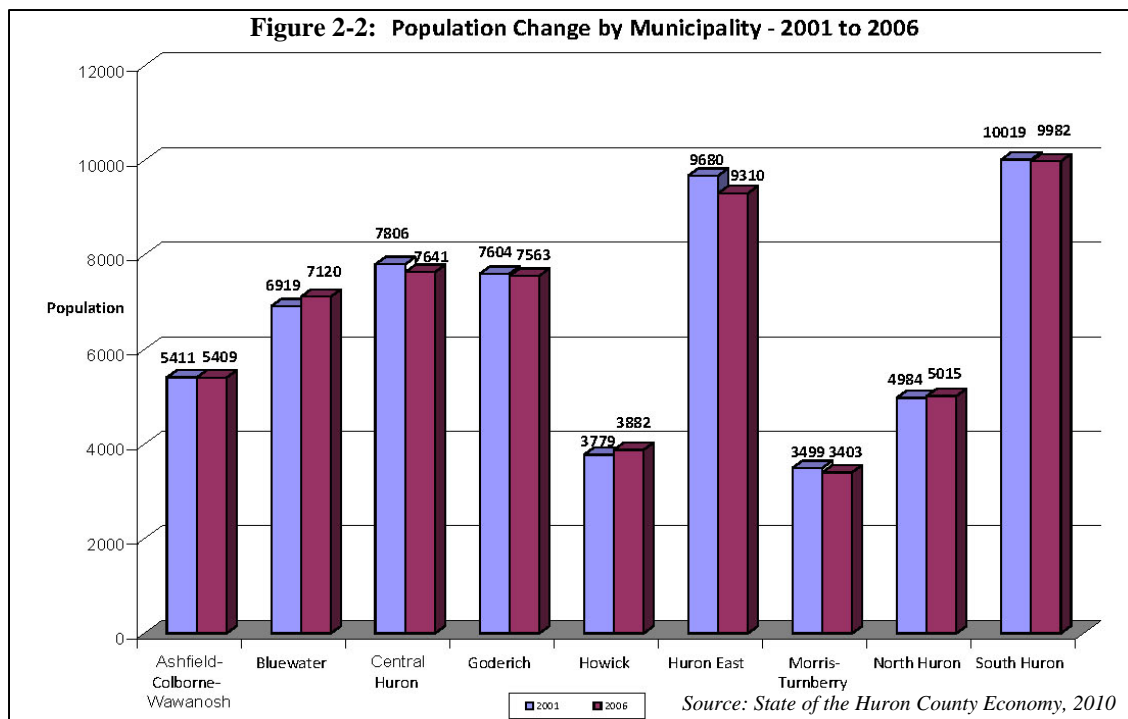
Huron County has over 3000 kilometres of roads, 110 kilometres of railway, 150 kilometres of marked trails and three local airports. The majority of trips made in Huron County are in a single-occupant vehicle; including 80% of trips to work. Additionally, the majority of children in the County are either bussed or driven to school due to an inability to walk to school for most children 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.

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. Further details with regards to alternative modes of transportation such as shuttle, taxi, air, rail, water, active transportation and recreation throughout the County of Huron is provided in detail in section 2.4 of this background report.

2.1.2 Demographics

The 2006 population in Huron County is 59,325 with an expected increase of 15% by 2031, bringing the population to approximately 68,500 residents. From 2001 to 2006, the population of Huron County experienced a population decline of 376 residents, or less than 1%. According to the 2006 Census Data from Statistics Canada, approximately 58% of the population is of working age while the remaining 42% are children and youth (15 years and under) and seniors (60 years and older). The median age is 42.3 years compared to a provincial median of 39 years. This has a tremendous impact on the way in which transportation demand management strategies and policies are developed. The trend of a high dependency ratio is expected to continue through to 2031, with a rapid increase in the 60+ population as well as a decline in the number of youth and adults as a result of a low and declining birth rate and outmigration of young people. Additionally, the population growth and decline is not spread evenly throughout the County. Some municipalities including Bluewater, North Huron and Howick saw population growth, whereas Central Huron and East Huron saw the most significant population losses declining 2.1% to 3.8% respectively¹. The population changes by municipality are presented in **Figure 2-2**.

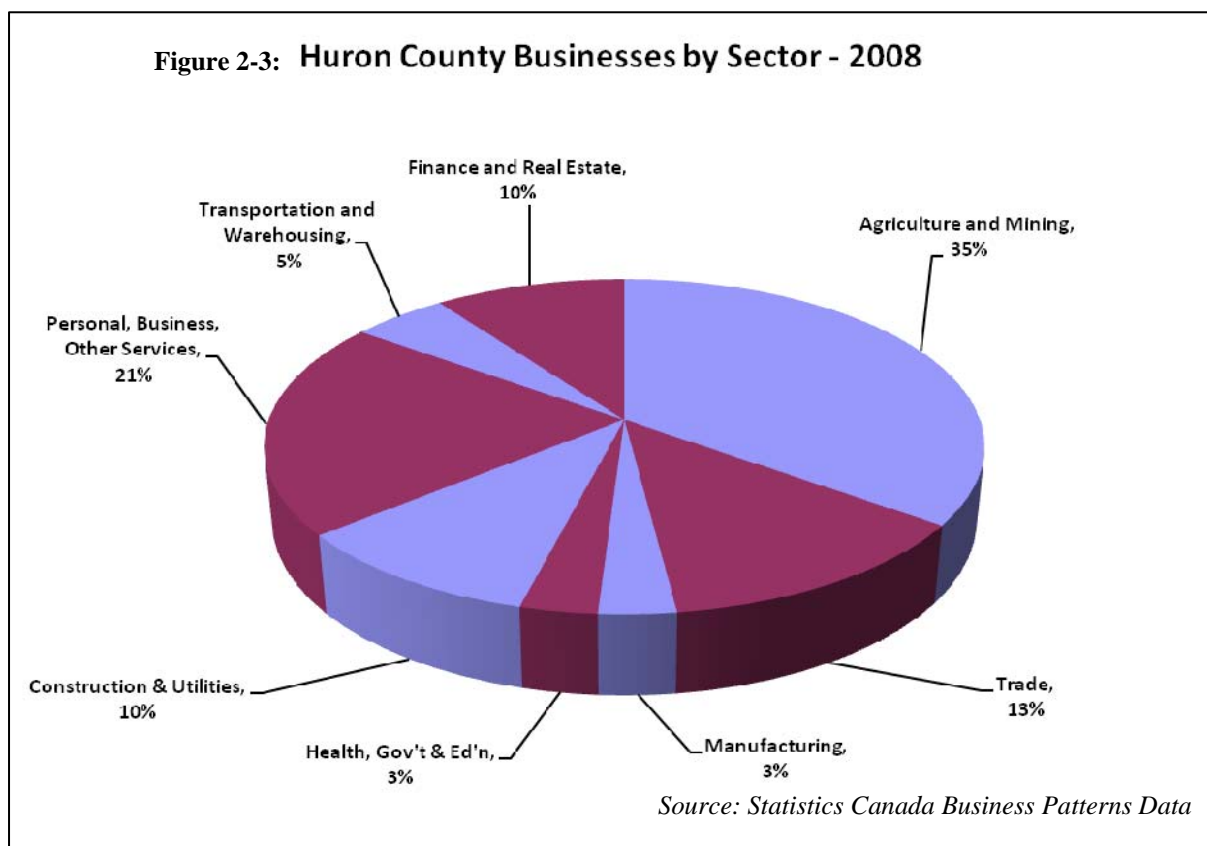


¹ HBDC, and Avon Maitland District School Board. *The State of the Huron County Economy 2010 : Towards Sustainable Economic Renewal*. Rep. 2010. Print

None of Huron County's urban centres exceed a population of 8,000 people with the Municipality of South Huron having the highest population according to Statistics Canada of 9,982. The population density of the County is approximately 17.7 persons per square kilometre. Approximately 60% of the population lives on rural agriculture and non-agricultural properties. Huron County is one of the most rural regions in Ontario. This is important when considering potential transportation programs. Accessibility for the population type and density is a critical consideration.

2.1.3 Economy

The economy in Huron County is largely based primarily on agriculture and mining², which comprises 35% of all businesses. Additional sectors include personal, business (e.g. manufacturing) and other services as well as retail and wholesale. **Figure 2-3** shows Huron County businesses by sector.



² "Statistics Canada Business Patterns Data." *Statistics Canada*. Spring 2010. Web. May 2010. <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca>>.

Huron County is home to approximately 6,000 farms and businesses, and despite small fluctuations, the number of businesses there has steadily increased from 2000 through 2010. From 2001 to 2008, the number of businesses grew by 629 (net increase over closures), which amounts to an increase of 1.7%. This growth was distributed across sectors, with the greatest growth occurring in finance, insurance and real estate and personal, businesses and other services³.

Although Huron County has one of the lowest overall unemployment rates in Canada (2.0% below the Ontario rate), it has still experienced the effects of the global economic crisis. In 2008/2009 there was a significant increase in lay-offs as well as people utilizing employment assistance programs. A turn-around in the number of job seekers has occurred, and in June 2010 there was a significant increase in the number of unemployed persons that found jobs.

There are a number of additional economic drivers that need to be considered, some of these include:

- Shrinking agricultural base, particularly in crop and animal production as a result of long-term stresses;
- Demographic trends that point to a potential labour shortage due to an aging workforce and outmigration;
- Significant tourism sector with approximately 500,000 tourist visitors to Huron County annually; and
- Growth in green energy sectors, such as the Capital Power's Kingsbridge II project which would result in an additional 150 wind turbines.

A number of themes, potential projects and potential partners relating to economic development have been identified by the Huron County Economic Development Department. These include:

- **Population renewal:** targeted recruitment of immigrants to attract skilled workers and investors, focus on youth training and development of leadership skills.
- **Agricultural renewal:** develop a commercial wine industry, ensure long-term success and development of local beef industry, encourage opportunities for local food incorporation via local schools, festivals etc., and stimulate new opportunities to increase agricultural capacity.
- **Enterprise Renewal:** ensure that support exists for small businesses including access to investment funds, workshops, enterprise centres, and programs.
- **Workforce Renewal:** ensure programs are available for older workers, centres for employment and learning, and promote the development of green jobs as well as development of new sectors such as aircraft manufacturing.
- **Infrastructure Renewal:** redevelopment of identified airport lands, additional uses for identified tourist destinations, expand tourism, harbour, arts and cultural infrastructure, and conduct necessary studies in potential regeneration areas.
- **Community Renewal:** encourage retention and expansion initiatives, promote downtown revitalization, develop a cultural plan, promote local businesses and undergo a strategic planning exercise to promote economic development.

³ "Statistics Canada Business Patterns Data." *Statistics Canada*. Spring 2010. Web. May 2010. <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca>>.

2.2 DEVELOPMENT IN HURON COUNTY

Unlike many parts of Southern Ontario, Huron County is not generally experiencing rapid growth and development. As identified earlier, population growth has been slow in recent years, even declining in some communities within the County. Rather than serving an expanding population base, development in the County is more focused on creating a healthy and sustainable Huron County⁴ – as outlined in the Sustainable Huron report in Section 2.3.3. Transportation demand management measures recommended should reflect the nature of development in Huron County and be fiscally responsible.

2.3 TRANSPORTATION PLANS, POLICIES & STUDIES

This section outlines existing transportation plans, policies and studies that are relevant to the development of the Transportation Demand Management Plan.

2.3.1 Transit Guidelines for Small Communities

The Transit Implementation Guidelines for Small Communities, authored by D.A. Watt Consulting Group with support from the Green Municipal Fund, provides implementation guidelines for transit development to small communities within Canada⁵. The Guidelines document includes a list of questions to ask when considering the implementation of transit, and common standards for transit implementation. More specifically, the document outlines “ways to assess the feasibility of implementing transit in a community” with specific reference made to a number of questions and tasks which can be asked when considering transit feasibility and transit implementation. The questions and tasks which are to be addressed throughout this process include:

1. What is the community wishing to accomplish with the implementation of public transit? What are the social, economic and environmental benefits of public transit?
2. Who will use public transit? What is the potential market for public transit?
3. What are the urban form, size, economic structure and demographics of the community?
4. What type of public transit service is required?
5. Where should the public transit service operate? What are the most common areas and facilities that citizens wish to travel to/from?
6. When should the transit service operate? What days of the week and hours of the day should service be available?
7. How much service will be provided, how much will the service cost and how will the operating costs be funded?
8. Who will plan, promote, operate and maintain the transit system? What components of the system will be operated by the municipality or contracted?
9. How much revenue is the system expected to generate? What are the types and amounts of passenger fares? How is revenue collected, managed and accounted for?

⁴ The Corporation of the County of Huron. *Take Action for Sustainable Huron*. Rep. Huron County, January 2009. Print.

⁵ Masterton Planning Group (MPG), and D.A. Watt Consulting, Transportation Division. *Transit Guidelines for Small Canadian Municipalities*. Rep. Town of Canmore, January 2006. Print

10. What type of vehicle and physical infrastructure is required? How will the vehicles and capital infrastructure be funded, operated and maintained?
11. What is the level of community financial support for public transit?
12. How will the service be evaluated? Is the service meeting community objectives, are the community and customers satisfied, are there areas for improvement, and how might the service develop in the future?

The process undertaken to address each of the questions and assess the feasibility of a proposed transit system is illustrated in a figure provided in Appendix A of this report. This can be used as a guide for communities when considering the implementation of a transit system. As the document outlines, questions 1 through 11 should be considered “a basic initial guide” which “can lead to answering the basic question: should we implement a transit system?”

It is important to note that these guidelines are to be used as an additional tool for the municipality along with other assessments within the community. The guidelines do not determine the type of facility, but provide a detailed assessment of the options available for a wide variety of user groups represented in each municipality.

2.3.2 Transportation Task Force Report (2008)

The Transportation Task Force Report is a comprehensive document produced by the Transportation Task Force for the County of Huron which details the existing transportation conditions, demographic and employment statistics, survey results as well as potential future initiatives to be explored within the County. The document provides the study team with a detailed understanding of what has been developed in Huron County with regards to transportation to date, as well as some of the opportunities and barriers to be considered when developing the Transportation Demand Management Plan.

The inventory in the Report was collected through a number of different methods including the development and distribution of a survey to existing transportation providers such as taxi companies, long term care facilities, social service agencies, bus companies, and all agencies that provide service to seniors, disabled, mentally ill and youth. In addition to the transportation providers, a number of human service agencies where transportation is not provided were surveyed as they require access by certain groups.

A key barrier for the County is thought to be a clear lack of transportation options throughout and between each of the municipalities. Simple errands such as grocery shopping and getting to school are difficult for those people who do not have a motor vehicle at their disposal. The demand for affordable transportation is growing and this demand is supported and illustrated through the survey results and research undertaken for the Transportation Task Force Study / Report.

More specifically, the document identifies the following groups as those that are most challenged:

- Youth;
- Seniors;
- Disabled Persons; and

- Women / Low Income Families.

A key piece of information identified in the Task Force Report is the barriers and gaps in current services. These barriers and gaps are an important piece of the report as they provide a basis from which to develop the TDM study and a more detailed understanding of the issues which need to be mitigated. Within the County there is a high demand for a wider variety of transportation modes, the transit opportunities are not ideal for user groups, there is minimal connectivity between the local municipalities, there is perception that there is little accessibility for disabled groups within the community and there are a limited number of service providers throughout the County.

This document is an important piece for the development of the TDM Plan. It will serve as a basis for the Plan as it provides the local knowledge and understanding which will be beneficial throughout the study process.

2.3.3 Take Action for a Sustainable Huron Report

The Take Action for a Sustainable Huron report (Sustainable Huron), adopted by County Council in June 2010⁶ is a community-wide initiative with the objective of raising awareness and fostering action relating to sustainability in Huron County. The document provides action in a variety of areas that will assist local communities in Huron in dealing with global issues such as climate change, energy prices and supply, demographics, international competition and additional trends. The actions outlined in Sustainable Huron focus on finding solutions that can be implemented locally that will help the local communities deal with larger and broader scale issues. Generally, the document calls for community engagement, informed decision making and the integrations of sustainability into the day-to-day business of the County.

The Sustainable Huron report was developed with significant public consultation with the community. More than 1,300 residents, community groups and organizations contributed to the identification of goal areas, principles and actions. Ten goal areas were identified, these are:

- Economy;
- Transportation;
- Agriculture;
- Energy;
- Livable communities;
- Natural environment;
- Population;
- Downtowns;
- Community needs; and
- Healthy active communities.

Additionally, Sustainable Huron provides guidance relating to sustainable transportation in Huron County. Four principles of sustainability are identified in this document:

⁶ The Corporation of the County of Huron. *Take Action for Sustainable Huron*. Rep. Huron County, January 2009. Print.

- Recognize the interdependence of environmental, economic, and social health;
- Invoke local responses to broader issues;
- Emphasize community awareness, education, and involvement; and
- Require the responsible and efficient use of both resources and energy.

The goal areas and sustainability principles, as well as the goals and objectives relating to sustainability of the County and its residents will be considered in the development of programs and policies relating to transportation demand management.

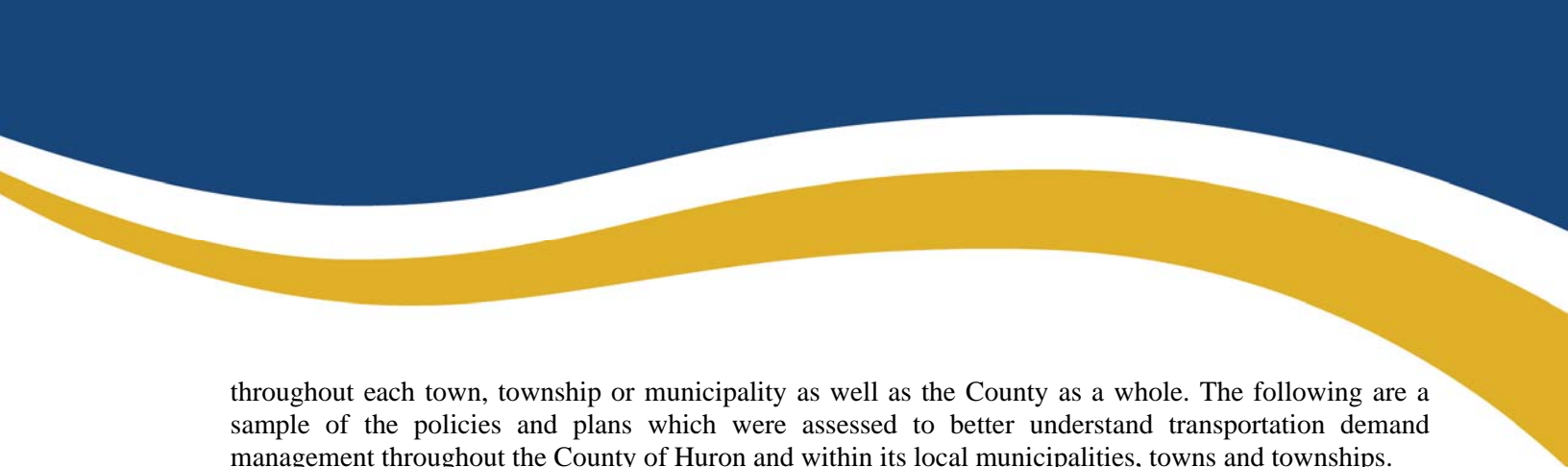
The transportation vision that is identified in the Sustainable Huron report is “In 2031... Huron County will have a transportation network providing multi-modal options, such as walking, cycling, roads, rail, water and air transit that meet the needs of the entire community” (Sustainable Huron, 2010). This vision will inform the strategies and policies that are formed as part of the Transportation Demand Management Plan. This vision represents a transportation network that includes active transportation, as well as innovative solutions to the transportation issues that are facing Huron County. Additionally, specific actions are identified in the transportation goal area that will also help to inform the strategies and policies of the Transportation Demand Management Plan. The actions are:

- Formalize the Huron Transportation Taskforce and develop a Huron County Transportation Strategy;
- Study the feasibility of an accessible, multi-modal public transit network including connections to Stratford, London, and Toronto;
- Establish a walking and cycling campaign;
- Locate bike racks conveniently at all institutional, commercial, industrial locations, including downtowns;
- Establish bike lanes and related signage along major streets and highways (connect the towns) and consider cyclist safety when constructing and upgrading intersections;
- Implement a ‘walking school bus’ for children in the towns and villages;
- Explore new opportunities associated with established airports, harbours and railway;
- Promote the economic and environmental benefits of carpooling and establish a carpooling/ride share program;
- Consider the triple bottom line for major infrastructure projects (economic costs, environmental costs, social costs);
- Increase use of recycled paving material; and
- Minimize environmental impact by optimizing use of road salt and calcium chloride.

The Sustainable Huron document provides invaluable information relating to goals and objectives for transportation in Huron County. The goals, principles and actions will be important when developing the Transportation Demand Management Plan and will provide guidance in regard to the community values in relation to sustainability and transportation.

2.3.4 County & Local Plans & Policies

In order to fully understand the state of transportation within the County of Huron, it is important to assess the policies and plans which are currently in place which dictate the future of transportation



throughout each town, township or municipality as well as the County as a whole. The following are a sample of the policies and plans which were assessed to better understand transportation demand management throughout the County of Huron and within its local municipalities, towns and townships.

Huron County Official Plan

The Huron County Official Plan was developed in collaboration with County residents. Through this consultation there were a number of issues that concerned the community including agriculture, community services, the economy, natural environment, extractive resources, and settlement patterns. The way in which the Official Plan was laid out identifies the six issue areas which were identified by the public. For each of these issue areas, a set of comprehensive principles were identified and deemed “community values”. Finally, based on these community values, action items and policies were identified for the County to achieve the “desired direction” indicating “what the community is willing to do”.

Based on further analysis of these six issue areas it is clear that within the issue of “community services”, transportation and transportation related issues are a key element of concern (page 13 of the OP). “Community services are wide ranging and include but are not limited to waste management, transportation, health care, education, child care, recreation, cultural heritage, safety and security”. When developing a TDM plan, the focus is on providing a wide range of modes of transportation but there are also elements of recreation, safety and security which can be addressed throughout the communities.

In section 3.2 of the Official Plan, “Community Directions” the goals for transportation are outlined further, stating that “the community wishes to maintain and develop the Municipal, County and Provincial road network and to promote efficient and accessible bus, rail, air and marine facilities and transportation and infrastructure systems and corridors through co-ordination and partnership”. The strong parallel between the community direction for transportation and the vision for the transportation demand management plan can be made.

It is also important to note the sixth issue raised, “settlement patterns”, which identifies clearly the importance of developing “strong, healthy urban communities”. Specifically on page 15 for the “community directions” for “settlement patterns” “the goal of the community is the support strong, healthy urban communities, this plan provides an adequate land base and allows for continued growth within existing urban areas on full services to encourage the provision of employment and housing opportunities while preventing fringe or sprawl development”. By developing and implementing a TDM plan for the County, new initiatives will bring a healthier community by increasing the activity levels while enhancing the importance of decreasing the use of single-occupant vehicles through the introduction of other modes of transportation. There are a number of health benefits which arise from the decrease of car use and the increased use of buses, bicycles, walking paths, and carpooling etc.

Municipality of Bluewater Policies & Plans

Official Plan – The Official Plan was developed in 2005 and adopted to “renew planning for the amalgamated Municipality of Bluewater”. The municipality was amalgamated on January 1, 2001 and is made up of the previous villages of Bayfield, Hensall and Zurich and the Townships of Hay and Stanley. The purpose of the Plan is “to identify the resources, capabilities and constraints of the land and the

community to enhance the stewardship of the Municipality's environment". This Plan will be used as a guide for all future developments within the Municipality of Bluewater.

Within the Official Plan there are a number of goals identified which speak to the future of the Municipality. One of these goals is "Community Facilities & Infrastructure" which is identified "to ensure appropriate and adequate services and facilities are provided and to direct new community facilities to settlement areas". More specifically, the Municipality identifies the importance of the connection of community facilities for social purposes. It is important to use the infrastructure which is developed, such as roadways, to connect these venues as well as other key destinations throughout the community in addition to connecting to surrounding municipalities throughout the County, a key goal that is also identified in the TDM vision and development process.

Strategic Plan – In the fall of 2004, Municipal Council initiated a strategic planning process in collaboration with F.J. Galloway Associates. Throughout the process extensive community consultation was completed including "public request for submissions from community residents and organizations, statistical and document reviews" and twelve focus groups with 100 residents from various sectors and geographical areas of the community. With the results from this consultation and results for various components of the plan, seven members of Council and four senior staff of the municipality met and developed the Strategic Plan for the Municipality of Bluewater, approved May 2005.

The adopted vision for the Municipality is "valuing our unique quality of life, recognizing our diversity, respecting our traditions". Within each of these themes there is a recurring message of connectivity, healthy and safe living, and increased quality of life, in addition they also focus on "readily available" services to achieve many of these goals.

Draft Community Improvement Plan 2008 – The Community Improvement Plan for the Municipality of Bluewater is used to rehabilitate and revitalize targeted areas such as specific properties, streets, neighbourhoods and entire communities. These improvements can include infrastructure inclusive of roads, parks and recreation facilities among others. Recreation facilities could include the provision of cycling, walking and trails facilities which are a key element of the Transportation Demand Management Plan for the County. It is important to note Table 1 on page 9 which outlines suggested improvements for homeowners. These improvements included improving the condition of residential sidewalks as well as increasing the variety of recreational facilities. Of these improvements, 46% support the improvement of sidewalks while 25% value an increase in the variety of recreational facilities.

In addition to these community responses, more specific recommendations were made with regards to community facilities and sidewalks. With regards to sidewalks, the community respondents suggested "an extension to the sidewalk leading to arena, along Queen Street West and on the London Road... as well as depressing sidewalks at street corners to facilitate access by disabled persons". Suggested specific community improvements include the installation of a bike path. For more specific information regarding the proposed improvements on roads where future facilities could be developed is included in the section pertaining to "Community Infrastructure". When assessing the improvement of these roadways it will be important to try and integrate other transportation modes or connections.

Municipality of Central Huron

Official Plan – The Official Plan for the Municipality of Central Huron was adopted in 2003. The policies and guidelines outlined in this document apply to all lands within the corporate boundaries of the Municipality of Central Huron, previously the Township of Hullet and Goderich and the Town of Clinton. The purpose of the plan is to “identify the resources, capabilities and constraints of the land and community, and to enhance the stewardship of the Municipality’s environment”. The plan was developed with significant input from the community, including 4 publically attended workshops throughout the study process.

“It is the intent of this Plan that the urban area of Clinton, and the area South and East of Goderich will function as the major urban service centres in Central Huron. The former Townships of Hullett and Goderich will remain predominantly rural, and will include agricultural activities, mineral aggregate operations and healthy natural environment areas.” (page 10)

With regards to transportation throughout Central Huron, in section 4.3.3.2 (Roads) there is significant focus on connectivity within the municipality as well as to local boundary municipalities. In addition, section 2.4 (recreation and rural residential), though designated areas determine the location of recreational facilities there is a clear priority for the integration of these types of facilities which should be a focus for key destinations or proposed facility types for the TDM Plan. Lastly, section 2.5 (open space and parkland) speaks directly to walking trails and recreational facilities for people of all ages and abilities, a key goal which is reflected in the vision for the County’s TDM Plan.

Township of Ashfield-Colborne,-Wawanosh

Official Plan – The Official Plan for this Township applies to all lands within the corporate boundaries and is used to renew planning for the Township as a whole. The Plan was created with extensive public engagement, including Township residents articulating and confirming a vision. In total, there were 334 residents and stakeholders who were consulted through public workshops and meetings to develop a vision, goals and policy directions. The key “purpose of this Plan is to identify the resources, capabilities and constraints of the land and the community to enhance the stewardship of the Township’s environment”. The vision developed for the Plan was “to become an environmental leader in agriculture, community, conservation, development and recreation / tourism”.

More specifically, within section 4 (Community Economic Development), there is reference to the “quality of life” of the residents within the Township. Within this section there is emphasis on accessibility of employment, health care education, recreation, culture and heritage as well as the provision of hard services such as roads. In addition to this reference made in section 4 there is further detail regarding the development of trails as a community facility / hard infrastructure in the section pertaining to section 8 with regard to settlement areas. It is clear that trails and healthy lifestyles are part of future development for the Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh.

Municipality of Huron East, Municipality of South Huron, Municipality of Morris-Turnberry, and the Township of North Huron

The Official Plans for these jurisdictions demonstrate recognition of Transportation Demand Management. The Plans support the maintenance of efficient, cost-effective and reliable transportation systems that connect to adjacent jurisdictions and serve the needs of the population. The plans recognize active transportation as forms of recreation and support the development of linkages in green space systems which encourage these forms of recreation. Existing transportation and utility corridors, including abandoned rail lines, are supported as locations for new, expanded transportation uses. In the Municipality of Morris-Turnberry Official Plan, specific reference is made to fostering airport related growth. In the Municipality of South Huron Official Plan, specific reference is made to encouraging main street style development that boosts pedestrian-oriented travel and shopping.

2.3.5 Accessibility Planning throughout the County

The County and local municipalities have identified accessibility as an issue which needs to be considered and integrated into both existing and future developments. The following provides a more detailed description of the accessibility plan developed for the County of Huron. It is important to note that the accessibility plan provides specific details on the levels of participation from the local municipalities.

Huron County 2007-2008 Accessibility Plan

The Accessibility Plan was developed in 2007-2008 in accordance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and was a collaborative study undertaken by the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) and the Huron County Disability Act Working Group. The Accessibility Plan applies to the County of Huron, the Townships of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh, Howick and North Huron as well as the Town of Goderich and the Municipalities of Huron East, Morris-Turnberry, Bluewater, Central Huron and South Huron.

This Plan is updated annually and includes:

- Measures taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities;
- Measures to ensure proposals for bylaws, programs, practices and services are considered for their effect on accessibility; and
- Creating a list of by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services that will be reviewed in the next year to identify, prevent and remove barriers.

The Accessibility Plan identifies barriers found within by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services that affect people with disabilities, as well as initiatives required to remove barriers and prevent new ones. The Plan speaks to the provision of transportation choices which “achieve an accessible community for persons with disabilities”. Throughout the development of the TDM plan, we will assess a wide range of transportation options which will include detailed consideration of the needs of those people with disabilities within the County.

2.4 CURRENT TRANSPORTATION MODES IN HURON COUNTY

This section addresses the transportation modes currently available in Huron County.

2.4.1 PUBLIC TRANSIT

Based on a recent initiative spearheaded by the Town of Goderich effective July 30, 2010, there is now a public bus transportation 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 the Coffee Culture at 58 Courthouse Square at the corner of Courthouse Square and Montreal Street.

2.4.2 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 the user with information on how to use the document. Information provided in this section 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 all the potential issues that may arise and how to appropriately conduct oneself 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.

2.4.3 TAXIS / SHUTTLES

Taxis

The Huron Transportation Task Force Report (2008) identified a total of six taxi companies providing service to various parts or all of Huron County depending on the company. Of the six 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

Aboutown 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 passengers destination. The NL Route #3 offers service on Thursdays from Wingham to Stratford. Fares range from \$11.50 to \$27.25, depending on the passengers 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 passengers 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. Marys and Area Home Support Services, St. Marys 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 Consulting⁷. 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.

2.4.4 AIR / RAIL & WATER SERVICE

With regards to existing air, rail and water services throughout the County, the area 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

⁷ Dillon Consulting Limited, and EasyRide in Huron County. *Assessment of Community Transportation Service Expansion in Huron County Final Report*. Rep. October 2010. Print.

connections. In order to access passenger rail service from Via Rail, one must travel to Kitchener, Stratford or London.

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 Port is a deep-water port on the Great Lakes- St. Lawrence Seaway and is the only industrial seaway depth harbour 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 annually⁸. Recently, the harbour underwent a dredging and docking facility project worth \$17 million.

Finally, 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 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 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. If there are to be any chartered flights, they 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 in Ontario.

3.0 BEST PRACTICES REVIEW

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 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. The following provides an overview of potential programs and themes relating to transportation demand management in rural communities:

- **Smart Growth Land Use Management:** in recent years, many rural communities have lost essential services, which have required rural residents to travel further to meet their daily needs

⁸ The Corporation of the County of Huron. *Take Action for Sustainable Huron*. Rep. Huron County, January 2009. Print.

and significantly disadvantaged non-drivers. In order to meet the needs of residents, the County government can co-locate and cluster essential services such as schools, stores, medical centres, banks etc., together it increases efficiency and accessibility. By creating centralized points where transit can stop, it will also increase the efficiency of potential transportation options.

- **Improve Transportation Options:** In rural communities, simple transportation demand strategies can improve transportation options to help basic mobility and transportation affordability. Some simple transportation options identified include:
 - Non-motorized options/Active Transportation: many rural communities do not accommodate non-motorized traffic well due to inadequate facilities and high vehicle traffic and speeds on roads. By implementing small pedestrian and cycling improvements such as ‘rumble strips’ or reducing road speeds improvements in accessibility can be achieved.
 - Ridesharing: informal and formal ridesharing programs can be an important option for no-drivers and people of lower-incomes. Popular programs identified include carpools and vanpools.
 - School Trip Management: Approximately 71% of school trips in Huron County are made by the single occupant vehicle or school bus, by implementing other transportation options for school trips such as transit, ridesharing and non- motorized improvements (including a walking school bus), this can increase the transportation options for students and parents.
 - Telecommuting: allowing people to work from a home or the local environment can substitute physical travel to work. By providing telework as an option, non-driving residents could have more options to enter the workforce and greater accessibility could be achieved.
 - Car Sharing: Co-operative auto networks such as Zipcar can service rural populations that don’t have access to a vehicle. By putting auto share stations in rural areas throughout the County, greater accessibility for people on farms and on rural properties can be achieved.
 - Expand Taxi Service: Taxi services in a rural environment can provide an extremely essential service to non-drivers. Often it is the only means of getting to essential services such as grocery stores or medical services. By expanding the taxi services or providing an inter-regional taxi service greater accessibility can be achieved.
 - Transit Improvements: Small transit improvements including: interregional bus service and local demand-response shuttles can provide a basic level of transit services to residents in the rural environment. By providing at least daily routes to larger urban centres, residents will have increased accessibility.
- **Transportation Incentives:** Providing incentives to commuters in a rural community to utilize alternative modes such as ridesharing and telework, increased demand may result and can help to achieve greater overall choice in transportation.
- **Increase Kilometers of Trails:** Increasing the kilometers of trails allows for active transportation to become a more viable option for cyclists and pedestrians as it provides infrastructure to walk and cycle as opposed to high speed and high traffic roads.
- **Establish Partnerships:** Establishment of transportation partnerships with local large employers can result in unique travel options for employees. Partnerships can help to increase overall transit capacity and help to share the costs among partners.
- **Transportation Management Associations (TMA):** In the rural environment, TMAs can assist in bringing several groups together, establishing partnerships and identifying potential resources.

- TMA's can also establish and run transportation demand management programs such as a senior shuttle, vanpooling and airport shuttles.
- **Tourism Transportation:** An influx of tourists can result in increased automobile traffic in rural areas. By providing programs such as shuttle buses, a reduction in automobile traffic and emissions can be achieved.

Table 3-1 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 3-1: Best Practices Inventory

Rural Transportation Project	Project Location	Project Type	Description
Rabbit Transit	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	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	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 carpooling, cycling and transit

Rural Transportation Project	Project Location	Project Type	Description
			<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.
Green Rider Ltd.	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
Vertigogogo	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)	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	Colorado, United States (firs	Active Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The transportation

Rural Transportation Project	Project Location	Project Type	Description
Transportation Authority	rural transportation authority)		authority purchased defunct rail lines 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)	Whistler, British Columbia	Tourism Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local transit service that provides free shuttles throughout the tourist areas

4.0 NEXT STEPS

This Background Report will be used to inform and develop a series of strategies for transportation demand management in Huron County. The recommended strategies will reflect the unique conditions of Huron County. All recommendations will be vetted through consultation with the public, the Transportation Task Force and County staff.

APPENDIX A

Transit Feasibility Process



D16-010-76

EXHIBIT 1 – TRANSIT FEASIBILITY PROCESS

