

Community Transportation in Ontario

Presentation for the Symposium on Public and Community
Transportation in New Brunswick

March 22, 2023

How Ontario Supports Community Transportation

The Geographic Context in Ontario

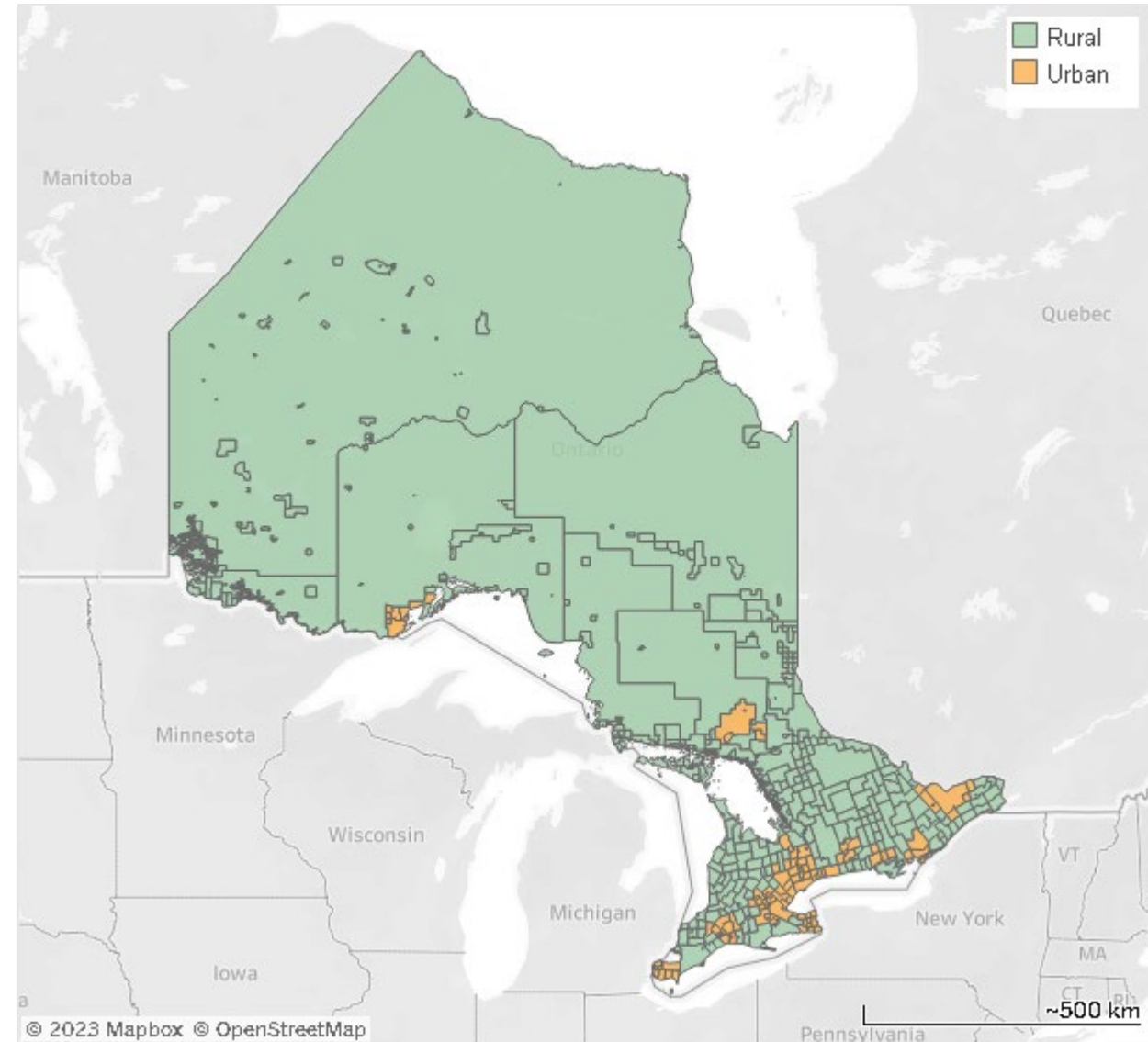
Ontario is comprised of a few large urban centres surrounded by suburban communities and vast areas of small and rural communities.

Urban Ontario

- The Greater Golden Horseshoe, centred around the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, is home to 10 million people, or two-thirds of Ontario's population.
- Five of the top ten most populous municipalities in Canada are in Ontario.

Rural Ontario

- 96% of the land area in Ontario is rural.
- In 2021, nearly 1.9 million Ontarians (13.3% of the total population) lived in a rural area.



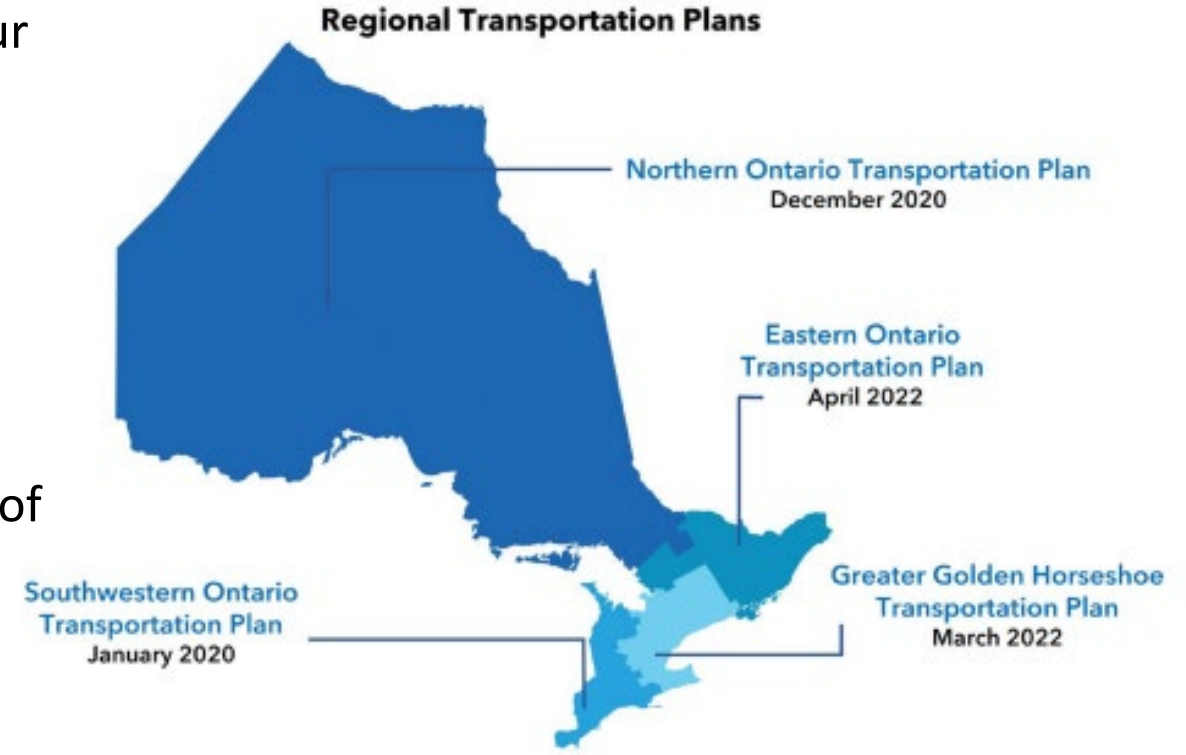
Urban versus Rural Transit in Ontario

2019	Small and rural transit systems (population < 50,000)	Large urban transit systems (population > 400,000)
Number of transit systems	47	10
Service Area Population	1,037,606	17,877,142
Passenger Trips	8,526,486	871,904,246
Percentage of population served by public transit	72%	92%
Revenue vehicle hours per capita	0.6	1.3
Passenger trips per capita	8.2	48.8
Passenger trips per revenue vehicle hour	14.0	38.6
Direct operating expense per passenger trip	\$5.98	\$5.16
Revenue/cost ratio	31%	52%

Source: 2019 Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) Fact Book
Conventional transit systems only.

Regional Transportation Plans

- To respond to the unique transportation needs across Ontario, the Ministry of Transportation developed four separate regional transportation plans:
 - [Eastern Ontario](#)
 - [Northern Ontario](#)
 - [Southwestern Ontario](#)
 - [The Greater Golden Horseshoe](#)
- The regional transportation plans consider all modes of travel – road, rail, air and marine – as one integrated system and provide a vision of the transportation system of the future.
- Despite each region having unique transportation needs, the regional transportation plans all highlight the importance of improving transit options, including through community transportation.



Municipal Transit Funding Programs in Ontario

The Government of Ontario has five major programs that support municipal transit.

	Gas Tax Program	Community Transportation Grant Program	Safe Restart Agreement	Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program	Public Transit Infrastructure Fund
Program type	Provincial, statutory	Provincial, discretionary	Federal-Provincial	Federal-Provincial	Federal-Provincial
Program objectives	Support public transit in municipalities across Ontario by providing two cents per litre of provincial gas tax to improve and expand public transit.	Support local transit and intercommunity bus projects in areas that are unserved or underserved by such services.	Support municipal transit systems to address COVID-19-related impacts.	Support the building of public transit infrastructure to improve capacity, quality, safety and access to public transportation as well as pathways and/or active transportation infrastructure.	Support the building of public transit infrastructure to increase capacity, service or better environmental outcomes through transportation systems.

Community Transportation Grant Program (“CT Program”)

- The CT Program provides funding support to municipalities to provide local and intercommunity transportation services in areas that are unserved or underserved by such services.
- An application-based intake was completed in 2018. From that intake, the Government of Ontario is providing up to \$44 million over seven years (2018-2025) to 38 municipalities to deliver 43 transportation projects.
- Municipalities are responsible for service planning and delivery of their projects. The Government of Ontario, as a funding partner, provides municipalities with flexibility to decide how to deliver their services in a way that best meets their community’s unique transportation needs.

Project Examples

[RIDE WELL](#), an on-demand, door-to-door ridesharing service serving residents all across Wellington County, an area covering 2,665 km².

[CT Link](#), a partnership between Simcoe County and a network of non-profit organizations, providing coordinated door-to-door transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities to get to non-urgent medical appointments.

[Rural and Community Connection](#) in the District of Muskoka provides fixed route intercommunity bus service with the option for “flex stops” that are within 5 minutes of the fixed route and “flag stops” that are along the route but not at a designated stop.

[Grey Transit Route](#), a fixed-route intercommunity bus service connecting communities within Grey County to each other and to neighbouring municipalities.

GTR

Grey County

- CAO
- Community Transportation Manager
- Communications Team
- Economic Development Team
- Legal Team
- Clerk Team
- Finance Team
- GIS Team
- IT Team
- Transportation Team
- Planning Team
- Emergency Systems Coordinator/ Claims Supervisor

Grey Transit Route

- 1 General Manager
- 1 Operations Manager
- 1 Office Administrator
- 1 Receptionist
- 1 Call Centre Employee
- 7 Full-time GTR Chauffeurs
- 15 Part-time GTR Chauffeurs







WE
NEED YOU



Southwest Community Transit





Background



The Model



Benefits of Coordination



Lessons Learned



Background



Benefits of Coordination



The Network



The Model

Background

- Where we are in the Province of Ontario
- South Central Ontario Region Economic Development Corporation
- Incorporated in 2010 to act as an economic catalyst to coordinate large scale initiatives for small urban and rural communities.
- Counties of Brant, Oxford, Middlesex, Elgin and Norfolk
- Priority infrastructure supporting economic development
 - Transportation quickly rose to the top of issues to support workforce attraction and retention, seniors aging in place, access to education and health care



Background

Current SCT Members:

- County of Brant – Brant Transit
- Grey County – Grey Transit Route
- Oxford County
- Perth County – PC Connect
- Middlesex County – Middlesex County Connect
- Municipality of Lambton Shores – Huron Shores Area Transit
- Municipality of Norfolk County – Ride Norfolk
- Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc – City of Sarnia, Strathroy-Caradoc, and City of London Route
- City of Owen Sound
- City of Stratford
- Town of Tillsonburg – T:GO



THE MUNICIPALITY OF
LAMBTON SHORES



Areas Served

Legend:

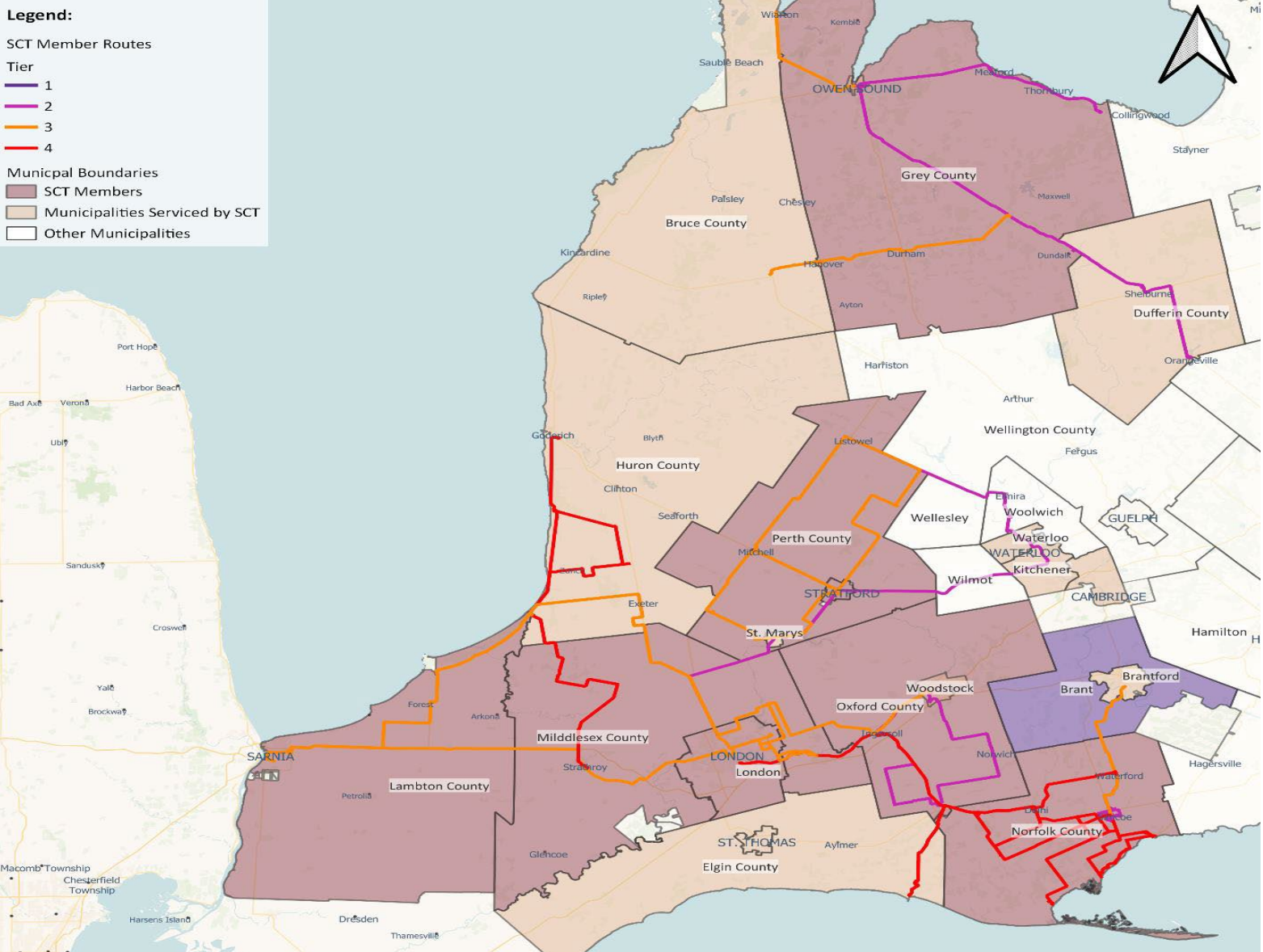
SCT Member Routes

Tier

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

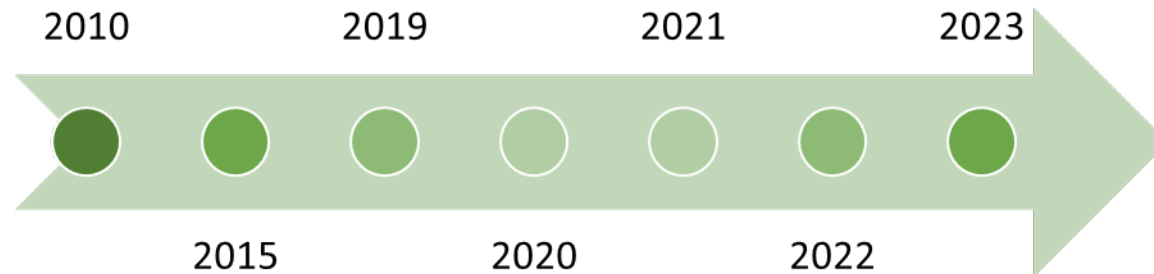
Municipal Boundaries

- SCT Members
- Municipalities Served by SCT
- Other Municipalities



Timeline

- SCOR EDC Incorporated in 2010
- Advocated to provincial government for need and support for rural transportation: especially inter-community transit
- May 2018 – October 2019 – Province leads discussion on rural transit solutions with wide range of stakeholders
- February 2019 – Province announces launch of Community Transportation Grant
- February 2020 – May 2020 – Development of wider model for SCT and draft MOU
- March 2020 – **GLOBAL PANDEMIC.**
- Still collaborating and seeking ways to be sustainable





Background



Benefits of Coordination



The Network



The Model

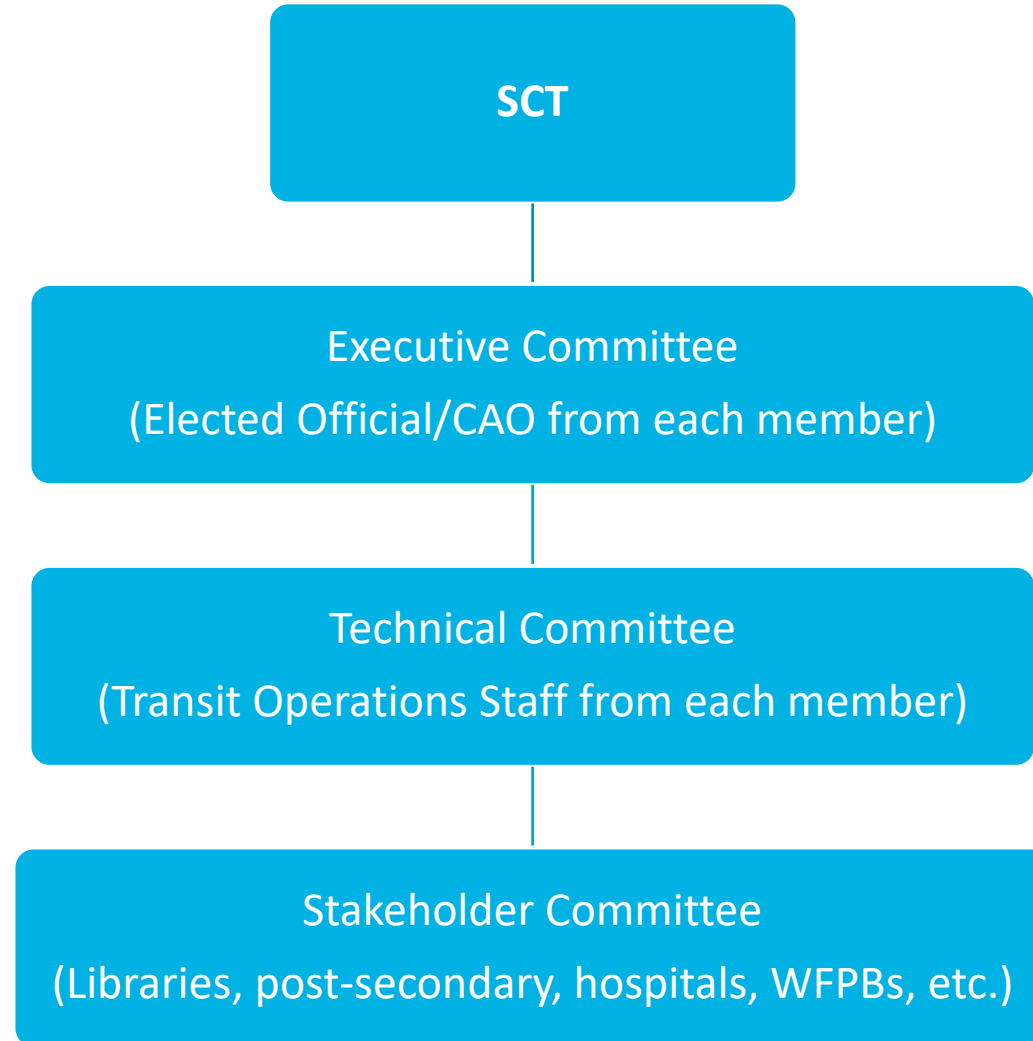
The Model of Working Together

- Each municipality continues to function within the terms of their own agreements with the Province (Community Transportation Grant).
- Each municipality retains independent transit brand while also becoming part of a larger more powerful network brand
- Three levels of operation within the model:
 - Executive
 - Technical
 - Stakeholder



This is the first of its kind of collaboration in Ontario/Canada

The Model of Working Together



The Model of Working Together

- Not all members are Community Transportation Grant recipients; some member services are entirely funded by CTGP while others are entirely municipally funded
- Most member systems are fixed route, although one is fully and demand and others have a hybrid model
- Not all members use the same service provider or technology platforms
- While uniformity is one objective of the SCT, it is not the only objective – differences allow for increased information sharing



Background



Benefits of Coordination



The Network



The Model

Benefits of Coordination

- Consistent messaging and branding across all regions
- Coordinate marketing & promotions to leverage economies of scale
- Common website for riders to obtain information on the systems (fares, stop locations, policies).
- Similar fare structures and transfer policies between systems to allow riders to continue to travel.
- Similar policies for accessibility to ensure a seamless service throughout Southern Ontario
- Common technology platforms to support inter-connected communities.
- Potential for joint procurement :
 - Electronic fare technology procurement and other on-board technologies
 - Transit advertising (on vehicles, transit shelters, transit benches)
 - Vehicle procurement
- Stronger voice for advocacy for provincial and federal support



Success in Coordination

- Utilizing each members strength and skill sets to benefit the wider group
- Leverage expertise and resources
- Development of common systems and rider experience
- An example of this is Town of Tillsonburg and Ride Norfolk Marketing



**PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY
TRANSPORTATION**

ONLY TRAVEL WHEN NECESSARY

Our services are operating on their regular schedules until further notice. To support the health and well-being of our riders, our drivers, and our community, please adhere to the following measures:

- Riders should only use public transit for essential trips. If you have travelled outside the country, or feel unwell, DO NOT use our services.
- In respecting social distancing, both services have implemented max capacity seating on board the vehicles. In the event a bus is at "capacity", riders will need to wait for the next bus.

Note: The launch of T:GO's Inter-Community Transit Service has been postponed until further notice (service was set to launch April 1).

If you have questions or concerns, please reach out:



tillsonburg.ca/TGO
519-842-4TGO (4846)
transit@tillsonburg.ca



norfolkcounty.ca/transit
519-428-3178
transit@norfolkcounty.ca

Workforce: Transit on Job Seeker Websites



[Home](#) [About](#) [Our Work](#) [Grand Erie Jobs](#) [News](#) [Contact Us](#)

JOB MAP All Tools Help

- Show All Skill Levels
- Show All Job Types
- Show All Job Durations
- Show All Job Languages
- Brantford Transit Routes
- Ride Norfolk
- Brant County Trails
- Brantford Trails
- Haldimand Trails
- Norfolk Trails
- Apprenticeship Training
- Child Care Centres
- Community Business Supports

A map of Brantford, Ontario, showing various transit routes and job locations. The routes are color-coded: purple for Brantford Transit Routes, pink for Ride Norfolk, and green for Brant County Trails. Job locations are marked with numbered teal circles (3, 6, 17, 4, 3, 16, 31, 25, 2, 2). The map includes labels for 'COLBORNE', 'Hillcrest', 'Windsor East Quarter Line Rd', 'Argyle St', 'Lyndale Rd', 'Victoria St', 'Concession 6 Woodhouse', and 'Hwy 3'. A search icon is visible on the map.



Background



Benefits of Coordination

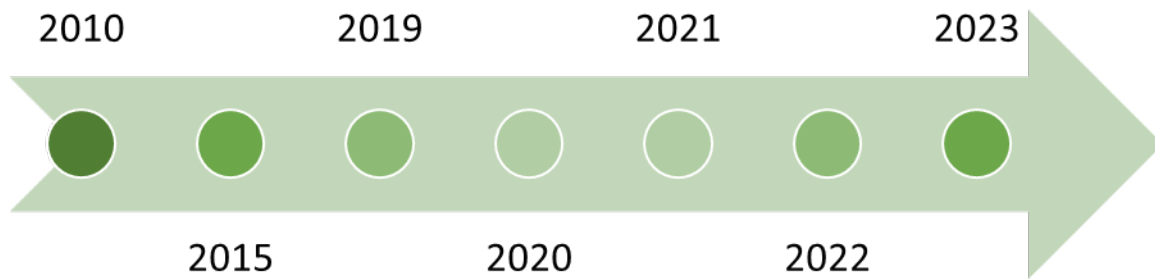


The Network



Lessons Learned

Southwest Inter-Community Transit Network



Lessons Learned

- Importance of seeking out partners with common goals and needs
 - Example: workforce planning boards, first nations, educational institutes, local immigration and settlement services
- Selling the “why transit is important messaging to council’s”
 - Have concrete messaging and what you will gain and what you will lose so council members are well informed
- If possible seek expert assistance
 - SCT has had the good fortune to work closely with Dillon Consulting to help us evolve our system
- It takes time and is a process requiring long term commitment and your service will evolve

Our Successes

- Over 33,500 riders in 2021, and 2022
- Recently awarded Rural Transit Solutions Funding from Federal Government to conduct systems wide analysis
- Previously received Rural Economic Development Funding from the Province of Ontario to support workforce mapping project

The Future of Community Transportation

- Challenges:
 - Unsustainable cost of operations – inflation, increased gas prices, supply chain issues, driver shortage, etc.
 - Rural communities' ability to attract staff with transit background to operate systems; tight budget results in limited transit staff
 - A lot of trial and error required for small/rural systems
 - Difficulty identifying an affordable technology that meets the needs of all systems and allows for connectivity between systems

The Future of Community Transportation

- Provincial funding for Inter-community transit projects ends March 2025
- Opportunities:
 - MTO's draft transportation plan for Southern Ontario supports continued investment in intercommunity bus services
 - Continued resource for information sharing, support in policy development, consistent operations, and increased purchasing power
 - Powerful advocate for sustainable community transportation that works for our municipalities, communities, and residents
 - Potential solution to alleviate transportation as a barrier to employment



Thank you!
Questions?

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