





Transit Feasibility and
Implementation Study

Interim Report 2
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County of Simcoe

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- A **Public Information Centre Summary**
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 For several years, Simcoe County and its constituent municipalities have been actively exploring transportation options that address future needs. Pursuing a county-wide transit plan fits well with the overall multi-modal focus of the County's transportation strategy focus on the integration of land use and transportation, access and mobility and multi-modal integration.
- 1.2 The *Simcoe County Transit Feasibility and Implementation Study* is an opportunity to respond to the challenge of supporting transit initiatives in and between smaller urban communities and the larger centres, as well as understanding and addressing the needs of vast rural areas.
- 1.3 This study is an important opportunity to take the development of the options for transit service to the next level and demonstrate how a comprehensive approach to transit in the County can improve transportation choice and community access, while ensuring that services can be provided in an affordable manner— managing this dichotomy certainly helps to raise its opportunity for implementation.
- 1.4 This study will build on this extensive body of work and the experience of the local municipalities to define the feasibility of a broader county service that:
- serves local communities
 - connects urban centres
 - facilitates local, regional and inter-regional commuter travel
 - supports the broader economic, environmental and social objectives of development in Simcoe County
- 1.5 Our work plan for the study comprises ten tasks:
1. Conduct project initiation
 2. Develop consultation plan
 3. Complete a needs and opportunities assessment
 4. **Develop vision, goals, and objectives**
 5. **Identify and assess service delivery approaches**
 6. **Develop and evaluate service options**
 7. **Develop prioritization plan for intermediate phases**
 8. Implications for specialized transit services
 9. Fares and funding sources for transit services
 10. Financial plan, implementation plan and study reporting

- 1.6 This interim report contains the results of Tasks 4-7, the vision and objectives, plus the options development and evaluation. Following this introduction, there are chapters on the following study activities:
- **Vision, goals, and objectives:** description of the future state of transit in Simcoe County based on shared community values, along with a set of goals and objectives to assist in implementing the vision.
 - **Service delivery approaches:** list of service options including fixed route, flexible services, demand-response and specialized transit options, along with a matrix of service options versus Simcoe travel environments
 - **Service options concept:** high-level service concept covering a number of possible connections
 - This section also includes the key results from the consultation with stakeholders and the public—a more comprehensive summary of the stakeholder and public engagement process is included in Appendix A and B
 - **Service evaluation and prioritization:** evaluation of those routes to create a recommended network, and a preliminary prioritization plan (subject to refinement following consultation with staff and stakeholders).
- 1.7 The work for this report has provided the recommended network, and an understanding of the potential priorities and strategies for implementation.

2 Vision, goals, and objectives

- 2.1 The purpose of vision development is to establish a description of the future state of transit in Simcoe County based on shared community values. The vision takes into account the “long horizon” and will form the basis for developing goals, principles, policies and initiatives. Accompanying the Vision is a set of goals and objectives. These provide a path for achieving the vision.

Vision

In developing the Vision for transit in Simcoe County, the natural place to start was with Simcoe County’s own mission, vision and values:

- **Simcoe County mission:** Providing affordable, sustainable services and infrastructure through leadership and innovative excellence
- **Simcoe County vision:** working together to build vibrant, healthy, sustainable communities
- **Simcoe County values:**
 - *Stewardship* - responsible guardians for a sustainable future
 - *Leadership* - inspire, empower, lead by example
 - *Integrity* - honesty, trust and transparency at all times
 - *Innovation* - creative, progressive, leading edge ideas
 - *Respect* - recognizing individualism through fair and equitable interaction
 - *Accountability* - commitment, ownership and follow through
 - *Co-operation* - positive approaches to partnerships, team work and understanding

- 2.2 Best on this information, the following vision for transit in Simcoe County was proposed.

Use transit to help build vibrant, healthy, sustainable communities, through affordable service, innovative excellence, and mutual co-operation.

- 2.3 This vision was adopted for use in this study following discussion with the project’s Advisory Committee.

Goals

2.4 Goals describe the desired end state— where the transit should ultimately be. They are an end to which efforts are directed, and are generally conceived as an ideal. The goals tie in within the vision, and working towards the goals should ensure the vision is achieved.

2.5 The goals used in the study are as follows:

- Support the County’s transportation system by expanding travel options for residents
- Offer safe and accessible transit services that enable all Simcoe residents meet their travel needs
- Provide affordable inter municipal transit services that support connections from County urban areas to facilitate access to jobs, education, health care, leisure, and social services
- Support greater economic development and agglomeration by expanding County mobility
- Anticipate and shape planned growth that is supported by a balance of travel modes
- Partner with other agencies to support cost-effective transit services that caters to the unique travel needs within the County
- Provide excellent customer service that residents expect and rely on

Objectives

2.6 Objectives are more precise statements of how a goal is to be achieved, and can be measured either qualitatively or quantitatively over the period of the plan.

2.7 Following discussion with County staff and the project’s Transit Advisory Committee, the following objectives were developed for transit:

- Provide an integrated network of inter-municipal transit services that provide connections throughout Simcoe County, including:
 - **Urban fringe connections** – Services that provide inter-municipal connections as part of one contiguous urban area
 - **Inter-community connections** – Services that provide inter-municipal connections between distinct urban areas, typically with longer separating distances
 - **Rural links** – Services that connect rural areas to service centres and other transit services
- Plan and prioritize transit services according to demand while ensuring alignment with County and local municipal policies
- Encourage strong community engagement in planning for transit service
- Serve county strategic growth areas as they grow over time by partnering with County and local planning departments
- Capitalize on innovation and technology to improve customer service and service operations
- Identify sources of funding to leverage local transportation dollars
- Work with other organizations (e.g. social service agencies, lower-tier municipalities, neighbouring municipalities) to maximize the use of available funds for transit service
- Develop reasonable cost structure, guided by the frequent service monitoring, to ensure long-term financial sustainability

- Provide service with accessible vehicles and accessible options to meet the needs of all residents

2.8 The objectives are used in this study to create the evaluation criteria. These criteria will provide a measureable way of assessing whether a particular option will further the objectives, and hence fulfil the goals and vision for transit.

3 Service delivery approaches

- 3.1 This chapter describes a number of service options that could be used for transit in Simcoe County, including fixed route, flexible services, and demand-response services. It then presents a matrix showing the most appropriate service options for the various Simcoe travel environments.

Service options

Fixed route

- 3.2 With a fixed route service, buses operate along an unchanging route, with stops only at pre-determined locations. It is the most common approach for transit within urban areas, and is also generally used for long-distance inter-city services. The area (and people) served by a fixed route are those within walking distance of the stops (typically defined to be 400m).
- 3.3 A fixed route service is simple for users to understand, minimizes administrative overhead, and provides a dependable (fixed) schedule and trip duration for passengers. It most suitable for corridors with higher demand (at least 10 to 15 boardings per hour)
- 3.4 The service area is limited to the walking distance from the stops. For an inter-community route, this means that serving all but the smallest communities (under 1 km²) generally requires either a non-direct route along local streets, or increased access distance and loss of coverage.
- 3.5 Within the Simcoe area, an example of an appropriate fixed route service might be along Hwy 26, or a Barrie-Orillia connector.

Flexible route

- 3.6 A flexible route service offers a variation on the fixed route concept. A bus's route is broadly fixed, but may deviate according to customer requests. This could be used if:
- a route passes along a major road near or through a community,
 - a fixed route would pass too far from passengers' origins and destinations, *and*
 - a scheduled detour off the major road is not warranted.
- 3.7 A flexible route can serve a larger area (and hence more people) than a fixed route. At the same time, it can avoid indirect routings through communities if there is no demand for that trip.

However, customers must contact the transit agency in advance to arrange pick-ups, and the schedule and trip duration can vary depending on the number and length of detours.

- 3.8 The degree of flexibility can be adjusted. This could range from a set route deviation along local roads, or point-to-point service. The former limits the disruption to other passengers; the latter is better for the boarding or alighting passenger.
- 3.9 Within the Simcoe area, example of flexible route opportunities might include routes passing through Stayner or Marchmont, or on the highway near Waubashene or Beeton.

Shared demand-responsive (“Dial-a-ride”)

- 3.10 With shared demand-responsive services, customers contact the transit agency to schedule a trip within a prescribed area. The area could range from a small community to multiple municipalities. The transit agency collates the requested trips, and schedules the vehicle to do the pick-ups and drop-offs as required. Passengers generally share their ride with other customers making trips to or from similar areas.
- 3.11 Shared demand-responsive services provide point-to-point service, replicating some of the convenience of a car. However, there is generally a significant minimum time between booking and trip time, potentially resulting in less choice in departure or arrival time. Further, the point-to-point service limits the number of trips per hour that can be served.
- 3.12 Within the Simcoe area, examples of potential shared demand-responsive service may be in linking low-density communities, such as Tiny and Tay.

Taxi voucher

- 3.13 Customers are able to use conventional taxi services for a fixed fee (comparable to typical transit fare). The transit agency then reimburses the taxi operator, paying the difference between the standard taxi fare and the cost to the passenger. The service generally has some form of geographic limitations. This could be limiting trips to a prescribed area, or only offering trips to and from a fixed set of destinations. Taxi vouchers also often have eligibility restrictions, such as those limited to seniors or youth.
- 3.14 Taxi vouchers offer a point-to-point service, similar to a car. The wait times are typically less than shared demand-responsive services, as there is no need to coordinate with other passengers’ trips. However, the cost per trip for the transit agency is the highest of all the concepts described here.

Combinations

- 3.15 It is entirely possible to combine various service concepts to provide transit across a large and varied locale such as the Simcoe area. For example, demand-responsive services and taxi vouchers can be used in low-density areas to link to a fixed-route service. This can sufficiently concentrate demand that a fixed-route service is viable, while still providing service across a wide area.

Use in Simcoe Area

- 3.16 The Simcoe Area includes a wide range of densities and community sizes. These range from the City of Barrie (population: 135,000) through to rural areas with no population centres (such as most of the Township of Severn).
- 3.17 As a result of this variation, the most suitable transit service will also vary, and so it useful to consider a set of *travel environments*, which group together types of area with similar travel characteristics.
- 3.18 Larger communities tend to attract more inter-municipal trips than they produce. This is because they contain concentrations of employment, education facilities, and amenities. Smaller communities are the opposite: they contain mostly residential uses, and hence produce more trips than they attract. Further, community size dictates the overall number of trips to or from that community.
- 3.19 The travel environments to be used in allocating suitable service concepts are shown in Table 3-1, along with their defining characteristics, and some examples within the Simcoe area.

Table 3-1: Travel environments

Travel environment	Defining characteristics	Examples
Large regional centres	Function primarily as trip attractors <i>May need to consider employment, education, and amenities as separate markets</i>	Barrie, Orillia
Medium urban nodes	Rough balance of productions and attractions Population of approximately 5,000+ in one community	Collingwood, Midland, Penetanguishene, Bradford Alliston, Alcona, Angus
Small communities	Primarily act as trip productions, few amenities	Stayner, Angus, Coldwater, Tottenham, Hillsdale
Rural areas	Population largely scattered; no notable concentration beyond generally a dozen houses	Severn, most other areas of Simcoe

- 3.20 Table 3-2 shows the most suitable service options for each travel environment.

Table 3-2: Suitable service options by travel environment

Travel environment	Fixed route	Flexible route	Demand responsive	Taxi voucher
Large regional centres	✓ (hub)	✓ (hub)	Immediate environs only	
Medium urban nodes	✗ (unless served by local transit)	✓	✓	✗
Small communities	✓ (only if on route)	✗	✓	✓
Rural areas	✗	✗	✓	✓

- 3.21 For large regional centres, demand-responsive services or taxi vouchers would only be appropriate for linking surrounding rural areas with the urban centre. Large regional centres can act as hubs for inter-municipal transit services, and offer connections to their local and inter-regional transit services.
- 3.22 Medium urban nodes are generally too large to be served efficiently by a fixed-route inter-municipal service. Consequently, flexible routes may be more appropriate. However, if local transit exists within the urban node, then it could provide connections to fixed-route service passing through. Alternatively, demand-responsive services may be appropriate. The choice would depend on the location relative to other communities, and key trip producers and attractors.
- 3.23 Small communities can also be served by a fixed-route inter-municipal service passing through the community. These routes may exist primarily to link larger communities, with the service to small communities being an added benefit. Alternatively, such small communities could be served a by a very low frequency fixed-route (for example, two trips per day, running on select days only).
- 3.24 In rural areas, the choice between taxi vouchers and (shared) demand-responsive services is dependent on the density of trips within the relevant area. Shared demand-responsive services tend to be more efficient where there is a small number of key destination points.

4 Service Concept

- 4.1 This chapter presents a high-level service concept, based on our needs and opportunities analysis and the strategic visions and objectives identified for the proposed County-wide transit system. It then describes how a number of route options within the service concept were evaluated, resulting in the network for the ultimate 15-year scenario. Finally, a preliminary prioritization of the network components is presented.

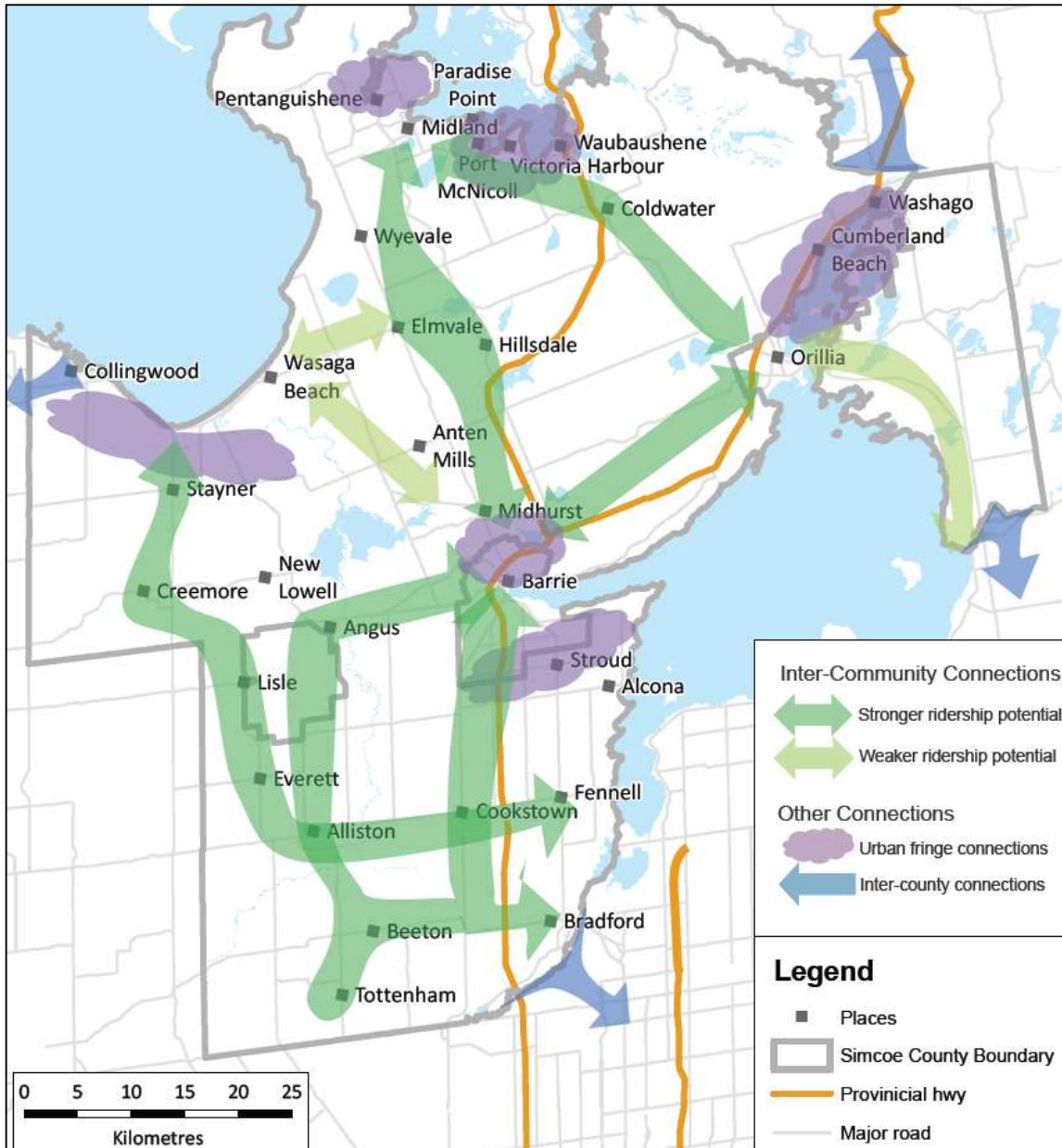
Concept creation

- 4.2 Existing (2011) and future (2031) travel data were used to identify trip patterns within Simcoe County, and for Simcoe to/from Barrie and Orillia. These datasets were sourced from the 2011 *Transportation Tomorrow Survey*, and from the County's TransLink travel model. The analysis revealed which communities had strong demand for travel between them. As transit demand along a corridor is strongly linked to overall travel demand, this resulted in a set of corridors with high transit ridership potential.
- 4.3 In addition to these ridership-orientated corridors, additional corridors and service areas were identified. These were based on wider social needs, drawing on professional judgement and consultation feedback. Also, several connections to areas outside of the Simcoe area were included, based on feedback from staff and input from the consultation process.
- 4.4 Following the identification of possible route corridors, four possible types of connections emerged:
- **Inter-community:** link communities that were in separate municipalities and had distinct (non-adjointing) urban areas. Example: Orillia-Midland
 - **Urban fringe:** link communities on the edge of large urban area with that urban area. Example: Barrie-Midhurst
 - **Out-of-county:** connect to destinations outside of Simcoe County. Example: Bradford-Newmarket.
 - **Rural:** serve areas with the smallest communities, or lacking any residential nodes.
- 4.5 Each of these connection types may require different service delivery approaches, including both the type of service (such as whether to provide fixed-route or demand-responsive service) and the potential operator (such as whether to use a local transit agency or some other operator). Consequently, this classification will help distinguish services when it comes to planning the implementation.

Proposed concept

4.6 The proposed service concept, as presented at the public information centres, is shown in Figure 4-1. Rural services are not explicitly shown, as they would potentially cover any part of Simcoe County outside the urban communities.

Figure 4-1: Proposed service concept (as shown at PICs)



4.7 Following public and stakeholder consultation, two additional inter-community connections were added for consideration: Collingwood-Stayner-Barrie (rather than relying on a connection via Wasaga Beach), and Tottenham-Bradford (rather than relying on a connection in Beeton).

Consultation

- 4.8 Following the work described so far in this report, the first round of consultation was held. The object was to solicit input from stakeholders and public into the County's role and priorities in providing transit, and into the service concept described here.
- 4.9 The study is supported by the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC). Members of TAC provide their perspectives and advice to the Project Team at key points throughout the study process. It includes representatives from transit agencies and municipalities in and around Simcoe, plus relevant County departments.
- 4.10 Six public information centres (PICs) were held on June 15th, 16th and 18th. The PICs were held in Stayner, Bradford, Penetanguishene, Coldwater, and Midhurst (twice). The locations were placed around the County to maximize potential public participation. , A stakeholder consultation session was also held on June 16th.
- 4.11 Full details on the consultation process and results were provided to Simcoe County in the *Public Information Centres Summary* and *Stakeholder Meeting Summary* reports in June 2015, which are included in Appendix A and B respectively.

Public information centres

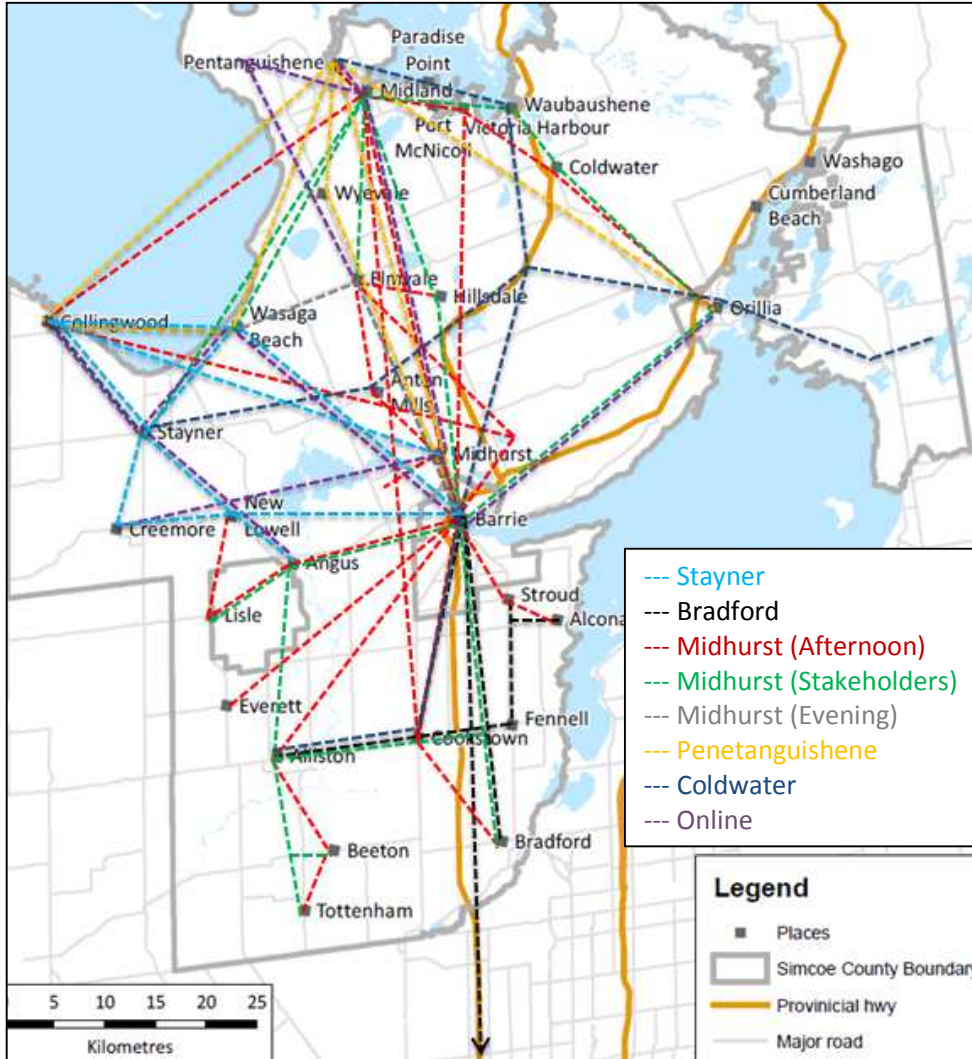
- 4.12 The purpose of the PICs was to seek feedback on the draft service types and concept and to identify and prioritize the objectives of the proposed service options. The PIC meeting notices were published in local newspapers across the County. There was also news coverage from a number of newspaper outlets. In total, approximately 80 people attended the PICs.
- 4.13 The PICs used an open house format where participants could drop in with information on the study background and purpose, draft vision, draft service types, and draft service concept shared on information boards and Project Team members available to answer questions. Participants were asked to provide feedback on the role of the County in providing transit, where they take inter-municipal trips and how they felt service objectives should be prioritized. Participants provided this feedback through interactive display panel exercises and by filling out worksheets.
- 4.14 Participants were presented with a number of choices as to the priorities for providing transit in Simcoe County. These related to fare levels, the target groups for transit ridership, and the potential service area. Participants were also asked to identify which of these three areas they considered the most and least important. The results are summarized in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: Public information centre service objective priorities responses

Item	Option	Responses	Most important	Least important
Fares	Offer affordable fares	27		
	Maximize fare revenues	0	0	5
Ridership	Provide service for key markets who need it most	18	8	1
	Provide service to markets that will produce high ridership	17		
Land use / coverage	Provide service in all areas of the county	19		
	Concentrate service in areas that are more transit-supportive	8	2	4

- 4.15 The responses do not necessarily form a statistically significant sample of Simcoe County residents. However, some clear trends are clear in the table – fares should be affordable, and coverage should be more wide-spread (rather than concentrated) throughout the County. However, it should be noted that the item that had the most overwhelming response (offering affordable fares) had the most responses for being the least important among the three items. At the same time, the item that was considered most important (ridership) had a more even split (providing service to those markets who need it versus those that would generate high ridership).
- 4.16 PIC participants were also asked for the origin and destination of their most common inter-municipal trips. These are summarized in Figure 4-2. The identified origins and destinations in the map provide a good understanding of the variety of trip flows in the County. Consistent with the study team’s examination of general trip patterns from the 2011 Transportation Tomorrow Survey and the 2031 travel modeling data, Barrie is notably the primary travel hub in the County. The extent of trips that radiate from Barrie, in addition to its strategic location in the centre of the County makes it an important location for inter-municipal services to connect to. The origin-destination maps also include other areas to which travel flows converge—these areas include Collingwood, Midland, Orillia, Penetanguishene, and Wasaga Beach.

Figure 4-2: Public consultation inter-municipal trips



Stakeholder meeting

- 4.17 The stakeholder meeting covered organizations whose members, clients or customers currently or could potentially use transit services within the county. Representatives from twenty-five organizations participated in the meeting.
- 4.18 The study team shared information and sought feedback from participants on the preliminary study vision, the different types of transit that could be used on a county-wide level, early thoughts on where new connections could be made, and some ideas on how to assess the different options.
- 4.19 The perspectives and advice provided by meeting participants covered transit markets, transit affordability, the draft service concept, the role of the county, existing community transportation, and other service objectives.

5 Service evaluation and prioritization

5.1 This chapter describes and applies a Multiple Account Evaluation (MAE) framework for evaluating potential network elements within the overall service concept. The MAE framework allows for transparent and evidence-based evaluation of options. The framework also facilitates a consistent and comparable evaluation throughout the process, even if certain measures are assessed qualitatively. The evaluation combines quantitative data and qualitative assessments.

Evaluation criteria

5.2 A set of evaluation criteria was established with advice from the Working Team and Transit Advisory Committee to provide a clear and transparent process for identifying the relative merits of each service connection as identified in the service concept. The evaluation criteria were developed by translating the established vision, goals, and objectives into measurable indicators (either qualitatively or quantitatively) where by each service connection could be compared.

5.3 To fuel the discussion with the Working Team, Transit Advisory Committee, and the Stakeholder Group, the team developed preliminary directions for the development of an evaluation framework, outlined in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1 Preliminary evaluation directions

Evaluation criteria directions	Description
Supports county and local policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes community connectivity • Provides connections to areas that support non-auto use • Integrates transportation and land use objectives
Promotes a growing ridership base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximizes ridership levels • Serves priority service markets (e.g. students, seniors, social services)
Minimizes net municipal costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimizes capital costs • Minimizes operating costs • Maximizes funding opportunities and partnerships
Promotes system service effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximizes synergies with other transit (including non-County) • Ensures ease of operation and management

Upon more detailed assessment of the directions outlined in Table 5-1, the study team developed specific measureable indicators that could be assessed as part of the evaluation (shown in Table 5-2)—each service connection identified in the service concept would be assessed and ranked accordingly.

Table 5-2 Preliminary evaluation criteria

Criteria	Rank service according to:
Ridership/fare revenue	Estimated ridership potential for the service
Capital and operating cost	Estimated capital and operating cost of the service
Supports future planned growth	Degree of which service provides connections to potential growth areas
Provides connections to transit-supportive areas	Degree to which services provide connections to areas with greater pedestrian access to transit and connections with local transit
Accommodates priority service markets	Degree to which service provides connections to these markets
Provides connections from around the County	Degree to which the service provides greater County-wide coverage
Allows for safe and easy operations	Degree of ease of operations (fewer operational concerns and inefficiencies)

- 5.4 Feedback from the stakeholder and public engagement sessions identified:
- the need to balance the need to provide a cost-effective service (by maximizing ridership levels) and the need to provide services to markets that rely on transit most (e.g. serving priority markets)
 - the need to build upon and make connections to already established service and ridership in Barrie, Bradford West Gwillimbury, Collingwood, Midland, Orillia, and Wasaga Beach
- 5.5 Upon more detailed consideration for the evaluation framework, the study team identified that the criteria relating to ensuring ease of operation and management will be an important consideration at a more detailed planning stage once the evaluation is complete.
- 5.6 Incorporating the feedback and considerations discussed, Table 5-1 outlines the first part of the evaluation process, which weighs the merits of the various connections identified in the service concept. Each connection will be assessed based on its potential ridership, anticipated cost, ability to serve priority markets, ability to serve transit supportive areas, and degree it supports future growth.
- 5.7 One of the limitations of this evaluation approach is that it assesses individual connections without consideration for the sum of its parts. Particularly in transit planning, the individual connections are important, but equally important is how those individual connections form an integrated network of services. Thus, an additional process was developed to consider these network effects—which would then help to determine which specific connections should have greater priority over others for implementation in the short term. Part of this additional process is also the need to consider expected land use timeframes. Because the route level evaluation includes a criterion that favours locations that are expected to grow in the future, the scores will favour these connections to be implemented in the short term even if the projected growth may not be anticipated in that short timeframe.

Figure 5-1 Route level evaluation process

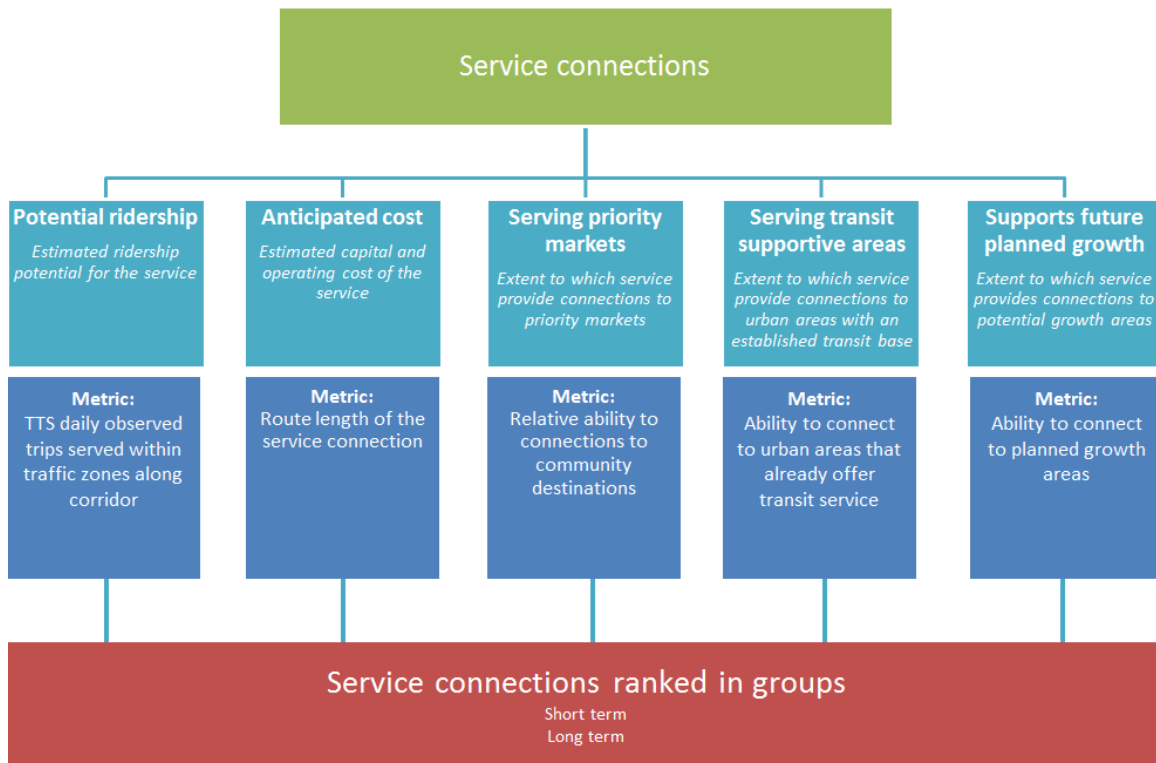
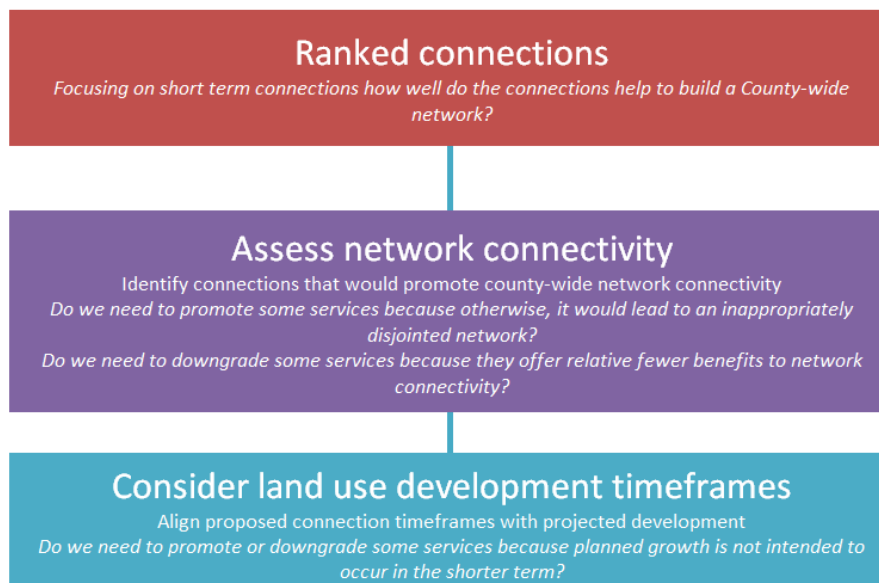


Figure 5-2 Network level evaluation process



Evaluation scoring mechanism

- 5.8 Each permutation of the alternatives was first evaluated and rated based on its relative ability to meet the identified service goals. The service alternatives were then ranked based on how well they performed on the five main evaluation criteria.
- 5.9 Each option under consideration was given a score from one to five under several areas, with higher scores indicating better performance against the objectives. The total score was then used to guide the option selection and prioritization. The following sections describe how the score was devised for each evaluation area.

Ridership/fare revenue

- 5.10 The ridership potential was based on data from the 2011 *Transportation Tomorrow Survey* (TTS). The data were used to calculate the number of trips (for all trip purposes) between the communities served by each transit route option. The calculations considered existing transit services. For example, a route option that served downtown Collingwood was considered to enable trips to all of Collingwood and Wasaga Beach, because of the existing transit services. The transfer issue was not considered at this point in the evaluation. In the detailed route planning, the continuity of services to maximize customer convenience and minimize travel time will be considered.
- 5.11 The results of this calculation were then compared against the total number of trips enabled by the existing transit system, with the difference being the ridership potential for that route option.
- 5.12 Once the ridership potential for all route options had been calculated, the highest-performing route option received a score of five and the lowest a score of one. The remaining routes were then allocated scores in a proportionate manner.

Capital and operating cost

- 5.13 The capital and operating costs were assumed to be directly proportional to the length of the route. Consequently, shorter routes were held to perform better. The shortest option received a score of five, and the longest a score of one. The remaining routes were then allocated scores in a proportionate manner.

Accommodates priority service markets

- 5.14 Information on the location of a number of amenity types was gathered from a variety of sources. The amenity types included:
- Colleges
 - Community centres (major and minor)
 - Health care facilities
 - Libraries
 - Secondary schools (public and separate)

- Seniors residence (large, medium, small)
- Town halls/municipal administrative headquarters
- Other attractions

- 5.15 Each route option was then assessed to see which of these amenity types it served, with points awarded for each type served. Serving multiple instances of an amenity type (for example, serving two libraries) did not result in additional points. However, serving a larger facility (e.g. a major community centre rather than a minor community centre) scored more points.
- 5.16 Once all route options had been assessed, the highest-performing route option received a score of five and the lowest a score of one. The remaining routes were then allocated scores in a proportionate manner.

Provides connections to transit-supportive areas

- 5.17 Every route option under consideration connects to one or more existing transit systems. Each route option was given one point for each transit to which it connected. The GO Rail and GO Bus networks were assessed as though were separate systems, because of the different roles they serve. The Collingwood Beach and Wasaga Beach systems were counted as one system, because of connectivity between the two systems.

Supports future planned growth

- 5.18 The first Interim Report discussed the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* and its consequences for the Simcoe sub-area (covering Simcoe County, Barrie, and Orillia). The *Growth Plan* identifies a number of areas residential growth, and several nodes for employment uses. In the Simcoe sub-area, these are as follows:

- *Residential growth areas:*
 - Alcona (Innisfil)
 - Alliston (New Tecumseth)
 - Barrie
 - Bradford (Bradford West Gwillimbury)
 - Collingwood
 - Midland/Penetanguishene
 - Orillia
- *Employment nodes:*
 - Bradford West Gwillimbury
 - Innisfil Heights (around the Innisfil Beach Road interchange on Highway 400)
 - Lake Simcoe (in Oro-Medonte)
 - Rama Road (on the east side of Lake Couchiching in Ramara)

- 5.19 Each route option was assessed to see how many of these residential areas and employment nodes they would serve. If the route option served none, then it was given a score of one. For each residential areas or employment nodes served, the score was increased by one point.¹

Evaluation results

- 5.20 The results of the evaluation are shown in Table 5-3. Routes options are grouped together if they share a corridor; some (groups E and F) are split into sub-groups, as there is only partial overlap between some members.

¹ Bradford is both a residential area and an employment node; routes serving Bradford only had their score increased by one point to avoid double-counting.

Table 5-3: Long-list of connections and score

Group	ID	Connections	Connection statistics			Individual criteria score					Total score	Short-list?
			Length (km)	Ridership potential	Ridership per route km	Ridership potential	Cost	Priority Markets	Transit-supportive	Future growth		
A	1	Barrie-Hwy 11-Orillia	38.4	28,906	753	3	3	4	3	4	17	Yes
B	2	Barrie-Angus-Alliston	47.8	31,026	649	4	3	5	2	3	17	Yes
	3	Barrie-Angus-Alliston-Beeton-Tottenham	73.3	45,288	618	5	1	5	2	3	16	
C	4	Alliston-Cookstown-Fennell	28.2	31,393	1,113	4	4	4	1	2	15	Yes
	5	Everett-Alliston-Cookstown-Fennell	39.0	40,083	1,028	4	3	4	1	2	14	
D	6	Wasaga Beach-Stayner-Creemore	20.0	13,417	671	2	4	1	1	2	10	
	7	Wasaga Beach-Stayner-Creemore-Lisle-Everett-Alliston	59.2	36,864	623	4	2	4	1	3	14	Yes
E1	8	Barrie-Angus-Wasaga Beach	44.6	10,082	226	2	3	5	3	3	16	
	9	Barrie-Angus-New Lowell-Wasaga Beach	49.6	10,082	203	2	2	5	3	3	15	
	10	Barrie-Midhurst-Minesing-Wasaga Beach	39.0	18,214	467	2	3	5	3	3	16	
	101	Barrie-Midhurst-Minesing-Stayner-Wasaga Beach	49.6	35,720	720	4	2	5	3	3	17	Yes
	11	Barrie-Midhurst-Anten Mills-Wasaga Beach	40.0	18,214	455	2	3	5	3	3	16	
E2	12	Wasaga Beach-Elmvale	13.1	1,964	150	1	5	1	1	2	10	
	13	Wasaga Beach-Elmvale-Hillsdale	25.0	3,024	121	1	4	1	1	2	9	
E3	14	Barrie-Midhurst-Elmvale-Midland	53.3	32,855	616	4	2	5	3	3	17	Yes
	141	Barrie-Hillsdale-Elmvale-Midland	66.5	28,593	430	3	1	5	3	3	15	
	15	Barrie-Midhurst-Hillsdale-Midland	54.0	26,642	493	3	2	5	3	3	16	
	151	Barrie-Hillsdale-Midland	54.0	25,411	471	3	2	5	3	3	16	
E4	16	Barrie-Midhurst	8.7	8,783	1,010	2	5	4	2	2	15	

Group	ID	Connections	Connection statistics			Individual criteria score					Total score	Short-list?
			Length (km)	Ridership potential	Ridership per route km	Ridership potential	Cost	Priority Markets	Transit-supportive	Future growth		
F1	17	Orillia-Cumberland Beach	11.5	13,817	1,201	2	5	4	1	2	14	Yes
	18	Orillia-Cumberland Beach-Washago	19.5	17,939	920	2	4	4	1	2	13	
F2	181	Orillia-Atherley-Rama-Washago	23.0	13,426	584	2	4	4	1	3	14	
	182	Orillia-Atherley-Rama	11.2	6,907	617	1	5	4	1	3	14	Yes
F3	19	Orillia-Atherley	6.4	1,974	308	1	5	4	1	2	13	
	20	Orillia-Atherley-Brechin	23.6	5,865	249	1	4	5	1	2	13	
	21	Orillia-Atherley-Brechin-Beaverton	37.9	6,590	174	1	3	5	2	2	13	
G	22	Midland-Port McNicoll	7.8	6,623	849	1	5	2	1	2	11	
	23	Midland-Port McNicoll-Victoria-Harbour	14.7	12,926	879	2	4	2	1	2	11	
	24	Midland-Port McNicoll-Victoria-Harbour-Waubaushene	22.5	14,158	629	2	4	2	1	2	11	
	25	Midland-Waubaushene-Coldwater-Orillia	53.8	47,525	883	5	2	5	2	3	17	Yes
	26	Coldwater-Orillia	23.0	30,407	1,322	3	4	4	1	2	14	
H	27	Barrie-Innisfil Heights	13.9	7,719	555	2	5	4	2	3	16	
	28	Barrie-Innisfil Heights-Thornton	18.7	10,087	539	2	4	4	2	3	15	
	29	Barrie-Innisfil Heights-Thornton-Cookstown	27.8	12,300	442	2	4	4	2	3	15	
	30	Barrie-Innisfil Heights-Thornton-Cookstown-Bradford	49.2	39,559	804	4	2	5	3	4	18	Yes
J	31	Midland-Penetanguishene	6.3	18,458	2,930	2	5	4	1	2	14	Yes
	32	Midland-Penetanguishene-Sawlog Bay	24.3	21,954	903	3	4	4	1	2	14	
K	33	Barrie-Alcona	19.8	23,638	1,194	3	4	4	2	3	16	Yes
	34	Barrie-Alcona-Lefroy	25.7	26,619	1,036	3	4	4	2	3	16	
L	35	Bradford-Bond Head-Beeton	20	29,085	1,454	3	4	1	2	2	12	
	36	Bradford-Bond Head-Beeton-Tottenham	28.7	35,541	1,238	4	4	1	2	2	13	Yes

5.21 For **groups A, B, C, D, G, H, and L**, the top-scoring route was chosen. For **groups J and K**, the ridership per route-km was used a tie-breaker between the top-scoring routes in each group. For the groups with multiple sub-groups, the reasons for choosing the routes for the short-list were slightly more complicated.

5.22 For **group E**, the two joint top-scoring routes were 101 (Barrie-Midhurst-Minesing-Stayner-Wasaga Beach) and 14 (Barrie-Midhurst-Elmvale-Midland). These were in different sub-groups, and had no significant overlap with each other, so both were short-listed. The routes in sub-group E2 are covered by route 101; the route in sub-group E4 is covered by route 14. Consequently, no route was short-listed from these two sub-groups.

For **group F**, there were three routes sharing the top score. The one with the highest ridership per route-km was route 17 (Orillia-Cumberland Beach). This does not cover the routes in sub-groups F2 or F3. The two routes in sub-group F2 scored highest. Of these, route 182 (Orillia-Atherley-Rama) had the higher ridership per route-km, and so was short-listed. The overlap between this route and the routes in sub-group F3 meant there was little benefiting in adding any of the routes from sub-group F3 to the short-list.

Out-of-County connections

5.23 Four routes assessed that linked Simcoe County with areas outside of the County. These would link the County with the following:

- Newmarket / York Region (from Bradford)
- The Blue Mountains (from Collingwood)
- Gravenhurst (from Orillia)
- Peel Region (from Tottenham)

5.24 These were subjected to the same evaluation scoring process as the intra-County connections. However, no score was allocated under ‘serving priority markets’ category, as these connections (by definition) do not serve priority markets *within* Simcoe County.

5.25 Further, the scores are not to be used to decide between service connections; rather, they help identify key advantages and disadvantages of each connection. The results are shown in Table 5-4.

Table 5-4: Out-of-County connections evaluation

Connection to	Connection statistics			Individual criteria score				Total score
	Length (km)	Ridership potential	Ridership per route km	Ridership potential	Cost	Transit-supportive	Future growth	
Newmarket	14.1	9,133	648	2	5	2	2	11
The Blue Mountains	8.3	2,621	316	1	5	1	2	9
Peel	44.0	6,791	154	1	3	1	1	6
Gravenhurst	27.3	1,374	50	1	4	1	2	8

5.26 Based on this evaluation, the assessment and recommendations for these routes are as follows:

- **Newmarket / York Region:** This connection performs well, but provision by the County would duplicate an existing service by GO Transit (68 Newmarket-Barrie). However, if this bus

service is ever replaced by two-way all-day GO Train service to Barrie, then GO Transit may remove this service. In that scenario, the County should re-examine this connection. Consequently, this service would result in low County-level benefits at this time.

- **The Blue Mountains:** This connection is currently being provided by Collingwood Transit and partially funded by private third parties. The noted benefits of the connections include a means for Collingwood residents (and Wasaga Beach via service connections) to reach hospitality-related employment in The Blue Mountains. While the current service does satisfy a need in the community, the identified score reflects a lower service benefit relative to the other service connections. If the County were to help fund this service, it would be in partnership with Grey County, The Blue Mountains, Collingwood, and private third parties.
- **Gravenhurst :** This route incurs significant costs on the route portion outside of Simcoe County, and attracts limited ridership in return. This connection is not recommended.
- **Peel Region:** This route is long and has the minimum score in all other areas. This connection is not recommended.

Preliminary prioritization

- 5.27 The preliminary prioritization for the various recommended routes is shown in Table 5-5. The prioritization of the routes was based on the network level evaluation process described in Figure 5-2. Under that process, each of the connections was assessed further based on:
1. its ability to promote county-wide network connectivity, and
 2. considerations related to when development is expected to occur.
- 5.28 The first criterion looked at how each connection promotes a more integrated County-wide network of services. Depending on the scale and location of communities each connection serves, some inter-municipal connections offer greater synergies with other inter-municipal connections in supporting transit ridership and county-wide transit travel. For instance, service connections between larger distinct county centres (e.g. between Barrie and Wasaga Beach; between Barrie and Orillia) expand the network potential for not only existing local services but supports ridership between proposed inter-municipal connections. Thus they were assigned a higher value in the evaluation. However, a connection between Orillia and Cumberland Beach for instance still provides important inter-municipal travel connections, but it offers relatively limited network synergies, especially if this connection was operated before those that do offer greater county-wide network effects.
- 5.29 The second criterion examined the scale of development growth between 2011 and 2031. As discussed in the Evaluation Criteria section (starting on Page 16), the route level evaluation includes a criterion that favours locations that are expected to grow in the future—thus the scores will prioritize these connections for implementation in the short term even if the projected growth may not be anticipated in that timeframe. Thus this criterion assesses the relative change (or “gap”) between existing (2011) and future (2031) trips for each proposed connection. For instance, the growth in trips occurring along the Barrie-Innisfil Heights-Thornton-Cookstown-Bradford connection is expected to grow at a higher rate (shown as having a “large gap” in Table 5-5) than trips along the Barrie-Alcona connection (shown as having a “small gap”).

Table 5-5 Preliminary connection prioritization

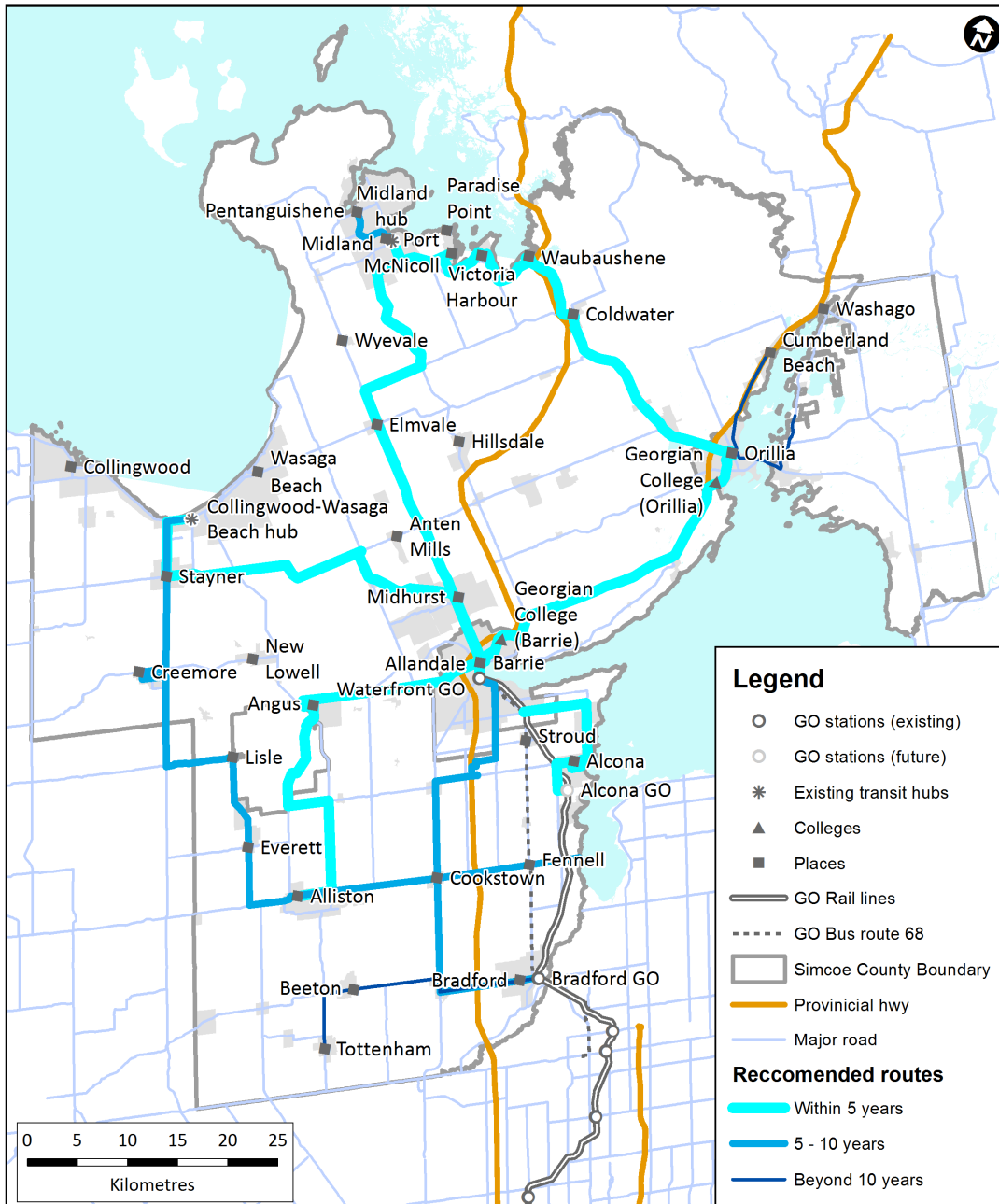
Connection ID	Connection	Score	Supports County-Wide Network Connectivity	Relative gap between existing and future growth	Proposed Timeline
30	Barrie-Innisfil Heights-Thornton-Cookstown-Bradford	18	✓✓✓	Large gap	5-10 years
1	Barrie-Hwy 11-Orillia	17	✓✓✓	Large gap	Within 5 years
2	Barrie-Angus-Alliston	17	✓✓✓	Large gap	Within 5 years
101	Barrie-Midhurst-Minesing-Wasaga Beach	17	✓✓✓	Medium gap	Within 5 years
14	Barrie-Midhurst-Elmvale-Midland	17	✓✓✓	Small gap	Within 5 years
25	Midland-Waubashene-Coldwater-Orillia	17	✓✓✓	Small gap	Within 5 years
33	Barrie-Alcona	16	✓✓	Small gap	Within 5 years
4	Alliston-Cookstown-Fennell	15	✓✓	Medium gap	5-10 years
17	Orillia-Cumberland Beach	15	✓	Small gap	Beyond 10 years
7	Wasaga Beach-Stayner-Creemore-Lisle-Everett-Alliston	14	✓✓✓	Large gap	5-10 years
31	Midland-Penetanguishene	14	✓✓	Small gap	5-10 years
182	Orillia-Atherley-Rama	14	✓	Small gap	Beyond 10 years
36	Bradford-Bond Head-Beeton-Tottenham	13	✓	Medium gap	Beyond 10 years

5.30 Based on the network level evaluation process, the proposed timeline for implementation is identified for each connection. As shown in Table 5-5, there are several connections where the network level evaluation process influenced the proposed timeline of implementation and did not follow the sequential scoring from the route level evaluation. These connections, and the reasons for the change, are as follows:

- Barrie-Innisfil Heights-Thornton-Cookstown-Bradford:** While scoring the highest in the route level evaluation, the connection is driven by significant future growth. This connection shows the highest percentage increase in trips between 2011 and 2031 (this attributed to having a “large gap” between existing and future growth) compared to the other proposed connections. A large proportion of that increase is a result of the growth occurring in Innisfil Heights—a greenfield area at this time. While a connection between the larger existing urban centres, Barrie and Bradford, does support county-wide network connectivity—this connection is already being fulfilled by GO bus services. Consequently, it is proposed that greater priority be placed on the other connections until significant development occurs in the intermediate communities along the corridor, such as Innisfil Heights—which is not expected to occur within the short-term (“within 5 years”) timeline.
- Orillia-Cumberland Beach:** While this connection provides important inter-municipal connections, it yields fewer network benefits than other connections that scored lower in the route level evaluation. Prioritizing those other connections (e.g. Wasaga Beach-Stayner-Creemore-Lisle-Everett-Alliston, and Midland-Penetanguishene) will support greater network synergies and more effectively build a ridership base.

5.31 Figure 5-3 shows the recommended routes, along with their proposed prioritization. The preliminary prioritization may be adjusted following feedback from staff and stakeholders.

Figure 5-3: Map of routes and preliminary prioritization



Costs and ridership estimates

5.32 The indicative costs and ridership following each phase are shown in Table 5-6. Each row includes the costs and ridership generated by previous phase(s). The assumptions used to generate this table are as follows:

- Annual cost is for hourly service running 12 hours/day and 5 days/week, at a rate of \$80/hour and average speed of 35km/hr; costs exclude fare revenue.
- Daily and annual ridership is for a 1 percent mode share of all trips between origins and destinations served by the transit network.

5.33 Further assessment will be completed at the next stage of work to develop detailed service designs for the connections identified within the five-year timeline. The detailed service designs will then help to better provide a clearer detailed understanding of the cost of operating the service and the expected ridership levels.

Table 5-6: Indicative costs and ridership

Timeline	Annual total cost (\$m)	Daily ridership		Annual ridership	
		2011	2031	2011	2031
Within 5 years	3.7	2,100	5,400	530,000	1,400,000
<i>Plus</i> 5-10 years	5.8	3,000	8,900	740,000	2,200,000
<i>Plus</i> beyond 10 years	6.5	3,300	10,700	830,000	2,700,000

5.34 The 2011 ridership corresponds to 1.2 to 1.8 rides per capita². For comparison, GO Transit gets about 8 rides/capita, while Niagara Region Transit gets 0.4 rides/capita. The latter service is relatively new, and the role of its routes is similar to that of the routes recommended here.

² Using the combined population of Simcoe, Barrie, and Orillia at 444,236

A Public Information Centre Summary

Public Information Centres Summary Report

OVERVIEW

Simcoe County hosted six Public Information Centres (PICs) on June 15th, 16th and 18th as part of its Transit Feasibility and Implementation Study (see Appendix A for the list of PIC locations). The purpose of these PICs was to seek feedback on the draft service types and concept and to identify and prioritize the objectives of the proposed service options. The PIC meeting notices were published in local newspapers across the County (see Appendix B for a list of newspaper notices). There was also news coverage from a number of newspaper outlets (see Appendix C for list of news articles). In total, approximately 80 people attended the PICs.

All of the PICs used an open house format where participants could drop in with information on the study background and purpose, draft vision, draft service types, and draft service concept shared on information boards and Project Team members available to answer questions. Participants were asked to provide feedback on the role of the County in providing transit, where they take inter-municipal trips and how they felt service objectives should be prioritized. Participants provided this feedback through interactive display panel exercises and by filling out worksheets.

Interested participants who were unable to attend the PICs were encouraged to partake in an online survey. The structure of the questions were largely similar to the meeting information boards and worksheets, but adapted to the structure of an online survey. Over 10 surveys were completed.

This summary was written by Swerhun Facilitation, a third-party facilitation firm that is part of the Steer Davies Gleave-led consultant team that has been retained by Simcoe County to assist with the study. This report is not intended to provide a verbatim transcript of the PICs but instead provides a high level summary of the perspectives and advice provided by participants.

HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

A high level summary of the views and perspectives of PIC participants as recorded on the information boards and worksheets follows immediately below. Detailed feedback from the information boards and worksheets is contained in the two subsequent sections.

Inter-Municipal Trips

There is a strong concentration of trips to Barrie with smaller concentrations of trips between communities in the south, west and north of the county, including the Alliston-Bradford-Innisfill area, the Collingwood-Stayner-Wasaga Beach area, and along the south shore of Georgian Bay from Penetanguishene to Waubaushene and over to Orillia.

Service Objective Priorities

There is strong preference for affordable fares, a greater interest in providing service to those who need it most rather than focusing on high ridership, and provide transit across Simcoe rather than concentrating service in areas that are more transit-supportive. Several participants felt that it is important to provide service to those that have few or no alternatives – those with low incomes, seniors and students. Some felt that service could be provided both to those who need it most and in a way that will produce high ridership. Several were interested in starting service in areas with higher populations, where connections can be made to existing transit and/or where there are higher concentrations of those who need transit most.

County's Role in Providing Transit

Nearly all participants would like to see the County play a greater role in funding/providing transit than they do today. A majority of participants felt that the County should fund/provide service across Simcoe. Several participants felt that the need for transit existed across the County and that a County-wide transit service could help stimulate economic growth and improve mobility for all residents by better connecting smaller communities. Others felt that service could start in select areas to help contain costs and raise awareness and then could expand across the county over time.

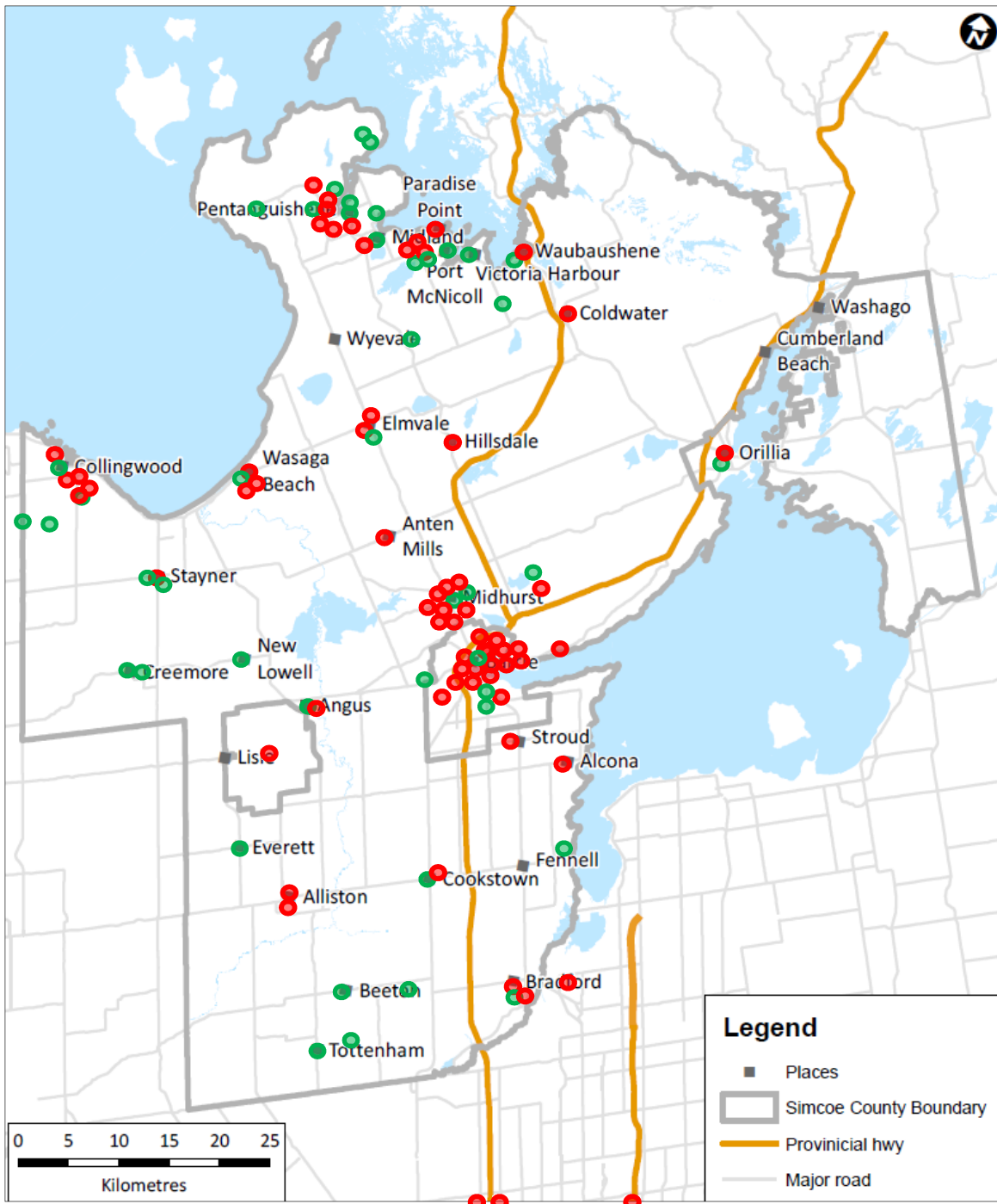
DETAILED FEEDBACK – INFORMATION BOARDS

Inter-Municipal Trips

Participants were asked to indicate the origin and destination of the inter-municipal trips they take on a regular basis by placing dots on a display panel featuring a map of the County (reproduced in the following page). **Green** dots represent trip origins and **red** dots represent trip destinations.

Participants' trip origins are highly dispersed across the western and southern portions of the County, from Collingwood to Bradford and slightly more concentrated along the south shore of Georgian Bay, from Penetanguishene to Waubaushene.

Trip destinations are also highly dispersed across the county in general with two exceptions; there is a very high concentration of destinations in the Barrie and Midhurst area and a lower concentration and more dispersed set of destinations along the south shore of Georgian Bay.



Service Objective Priorities

Participants were asked to help prioritize service objectives by placing dots on a display panel featuring three sets of objectives: fares, ridership and land use/coverage. Each of these sets featured two objectives and participants were asked to place a dot beside the objective that they preferred. In addition to selecting their preferred objective for each set, participants were asked to indicate which set of objectives (fares, ridership and land use/coverage) was most important and which set was least important.

As shown in the table below, people who participated in this display panel exercise expressed a very strong preference for affordable fares over maximizing revenue, a balance between a service for markets who need it most and markets that will provide high ridership, and a preference for base service in all areas of the County over concentrating service in areas that are more transit-supportive.

A majority of participants who provided feedback through this exercise felt that the ridership objectives were the most important while there was a relatively even split between those who felt that the fare objectives were least important and those who felt that the land use/coverage objectives were least important.

			Most Important	Least Important
Fares	Offer affordable fares	27	0	5
	Maximize fare revenues	0		
Ridership	Provide service for key markets who need it most	18	8	1
	Provide service to markets that will produce high ridership	17		
Land Use/Coverage	Provide service in all areas of the county	19	2	4
	Concentrate service in areas that are more transit-supportive	8		

County’s Role in Providing Transit

The County of Simcoe does not currently provide transit services. However, it does provide some supporting funding to local municipalities that do provide transit services. PIC participants were asked to provide their views on the extent to which this should change by placing dots on a display panel featuring three options for how the County could be involved in enable County-wide transit.

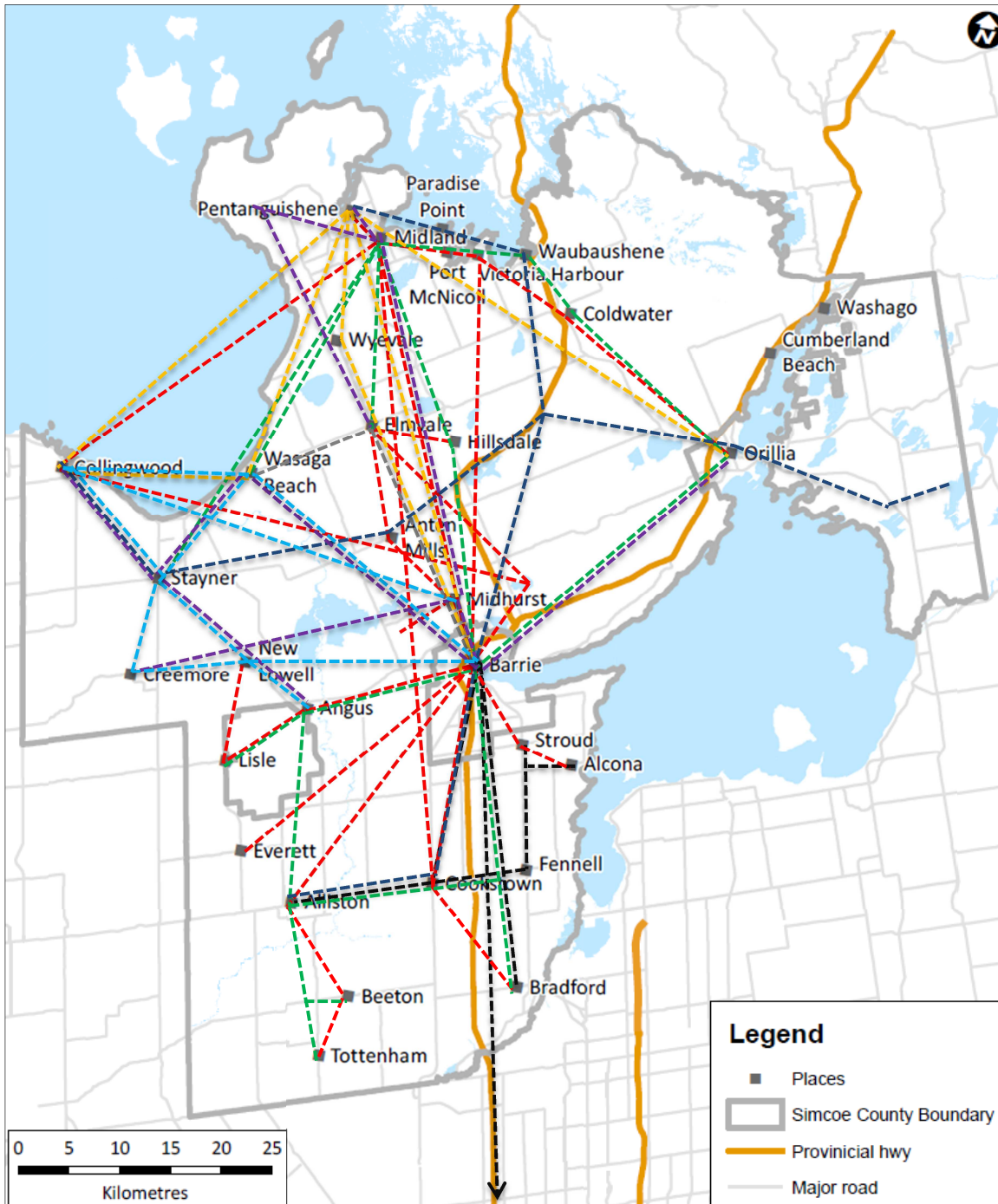
Nine in ten people who participated in this display panel activity felt that the County should fund/provide transit services to a greater extent than it does today. Just over half felt that the County should do so across the entire county while a little over two-thirds felt that the County should fund/provide select inter-municipal transit connects.

Maintain existing situation	County funds/provides select inter-municipal transit connections	County funds and/or provides transit services across Simcoe County
4	15	22

DETAILED FEEDBACK – WORKSHEETS

Inter-Municipal Trips

Participants were asked to map the trips they take on a regular basis by drawing lines on a map contained in the worksheet. The map below contains an amalgamation of all trips indicated by participants on worksheets collected at each of the PICs, at a stakeholder meeting that was held between the afternoon and evening PICs in Midhurst, and from the online survey as follows: **Stayner, Bradford, Midhurst (Afternoon), Midhurst (Stakeholder Meeting), Midhurst (Evening), Penetanguishene, Coldwater, and online.**



The greatest number of connections indicated by participants was between Barrie and nearly all parts of the County. There is also a high number of connections between Midland and Penetanguishene and other communities in the northern half of the County (i.e. north of Barrie). Smaller clusters of connections exist between communities in the Alliston-Bradford-Innisfil area, between communities in the Collingwood-Stayner-Wasaga Beach area, and along the south shore of Georgian Bay from Penetanguishene to Waubaushene and over to Orillia.

Participants were also asked to indicate the reasons that they took these trips, with six options listed: School, Work, Medical, Leisure, Shopping and Other. The results from worksheets collected at each of the PICs and Stakeholder Meeting are shown in the tables below.

There was a relatively even balance between the different reasons that participants would take transit trips, with the exception of trips to school. Participants listed a number of other reasons that they would take regular trips, including trips for recreation, community groups, and social and government services.

	School	Work	Medical	Leisure	Shopping	Other
Stayner	0	4	3	5	5	None
Bradford	0	0	2	2	3	Library, Theatre, Groceries, Family, Political
Midhurst (Afternoon)	1	5	3	2	3	Council and County Meetings, Sports Fields for Children (often), Family Court, Ontario Works, Church
Midhurst (Stakeholder Meeting)	0	3	2	3	2	None
Midhurst (Evening)	0	1	0	1	0	None
Penetanguishene	1	6	5	3	4	Clients of Waypoint, ALPs, Midland Learning, College, Psychiatrist Appointments, Groups, Bank, Training
Coldwater	0	1	0	1	1	General Trips
Online	0	7	3	1	3	None
Totals	2	27	18	18	21	

Some participants provided additional comments on their inter-municipal trips. In addition to identifying the frequency of trips and the combination of destination and trip purpose, participants identified a number of specific trip generators that they felt could be better served by transit, including: the Snow Valley Resort, My Sister's Place, the Simcoe County Museum, Community Living Huronia, County Administrative Centre, and Barrie City Hall. All comments are included in full below.

- If I could not drive I would need transit for: 1. Medical (Stroud, Bradford and Newmarket); 2. Shopping (Alcona and Stroud); 3. Groceries (Bradford); and 4. Leisure (Alliston, Barrie, Stroud, Bradford, Alcona and Newmarket).
- These trips are not taken weekly, but rather a few times a month for work, shopping or leisure.
- Snow Valley Resort – skiing, snowboarding, snow tubing, snowshoeing; Ontario's best resort for families to learn to ski and snowboard; large catchment area; meet weekend GO train in Barrie
- Work every day
- My Sister's Place, shelter for abused women and their children serves South Simcoe. Women accessing these services have need to travel to Barrie for numerous reasons. The current service

from Angus is a start but individuals still need to get to Angus first. Currently there is no affordable transportation.

- What are the criteria to determine the County services – should take transit nodes into account.
- Orillia to Midland most common 4/week; Barrie to Orillia common – 3/month; Barrie to Midland least common 1/month
- The Simcoe County Arts & Crafts Association frequently receives inquiries about why there is no transit service to the Simcoe County Museum. Many of our older members no longer drive and so have no way to get to our meetings or special events. It’s also a concern for visitors who would like to attend/shop at the Quilt County Quilt, Rug and Craft Fair in September and our Celebration of Arts & Crafts in March. Local artists rely on these events for income.
- I live in Midland and work in Penetanguishene so my daily commute is between these two points.
- Penetanguishene shopping, Midland shopping and mall, Midland hospital, Barrie hospital, and Barrie bus station or GO train to Toronto to get to oncologist appointments.
- Community Living Huronia has people interested in coming into its program in Midland from Lafontaine, Port McNicoll, Victoria Harbour, Waubauskene, Perkinsfield and Wyevale. Currently need to pay for cab, which is very expensive when Ontario Disability Support Program services run Monday – Friday.
- Would never use it.

Service Objective Priorities

The second question on the worksheet asked participants to state their preference between service objectives. The service objectives were organized into three sets – Fares, Ridership and Land Use/Coverage – with each set featuring two objectives.

Participants expressed a strong preference for affordable fares over maximizing fare revenue. Almost twice as many preferred providing service to markets who need it most over service for markets that will produce high ridership. Almost six in ten felt that there should be service in all areas of the county rather than concentrating service in areas that are more transit-supportive.

	Fares		Ridership		Land Use/Coverage	
	Offer Affordable Fares	Maximize Fare Revenues	Provide service for key markets who need it most	Provide service to markets that will produce high ridership	Provide service in all areas of the county	Concentrate service in areas that are more transit-supportive
Stayner	5	0	2	1	1	4
Bradford	3	0	2	2	3	0
Midhurst (Afternoon)	4	1	4	4	2	3
Midhurst (Stakeholder Meeting)	3	0	2	0	1	1
Midhurst (Evening)	1	0	0	1	1	0
Penetanguishene	8	1	7	2	7	2
Coldwater	1	1	1	0	0	1
Online	7	3	8	2	8	2
Totals	32	6	26	12	23	13

Some participants provided additional comments on why they made their choices regarding service objective priorities. Many felt that it is important to provide service to those that have few or no alternatives – those with low incomes, seniors and students. Some felt that service could be provided

both to those who need it most and in a way that will produce high ridership. Several were interested in starting service in areas with higher populations, where connections can be made to existing transit and/or where there are higher concentrations of those who need transit most. All comments are included in full below.

- \$2.00? Collingwood/Wasaga Beach
- Provide service key markets who need it most – all people
- Asset to the town and village (Stayner).
- No taxi company in Stayner.
- Having a service where it will be used is important in reducing carbon emissions.
- These look like the most usable (Offer affordable fares for passengers, provide service to markets that will produce high ridership, concentrate service in areas that are more transit-supportive).
- I think it makes sense to encourage transit routes in connection with settlement areas. Fares should be low, I don't think public transit can realistically create self-supportive revenue, but it's necessary.
- Everybody needs access to transit. Rural, towns, semi-rural need a bus or taxi at an affordable cost. An attractive feature for a community.
- Made most appropriate responses; not the best questions.
- Provide service to key markets who need it most and to markets that will produce high ridership.
- So many single seniors without vehicles in the County are housebound or reliant on busy family members. The same for young teenagers and adults. It is also costly to own a car. I believe in public transit and would pay more taxes to improve the quality of life of others!
- Provide service to key markets who need it most and to markets that will produce high ridership.
- Logical and affordable approach.
- Transportation is a vital service. Some communities in Simcoe County have addressed the need and are offering minimal/limited transit however all areas are in need.
- Service should be affordable but also sustainable.
- For service coverage, it is important to start where connections can be made to existing transit services.
- We need a way to get people to work, to get groceries and to get medical attention from settlement areas.
- With higher ridership, transit will become a more normal part of daily rural life.
- In the short term, low-income and special needs populations will be the users. At the same time, you have to start in higher population centres.
- There are many individuals on social assistance (minimal budget for transportation) – fares should be affordable.
- Seniors, persons with disabilities, youth are the key markets who need it most.
- To provide access to all for employment, medical, leisure, services, education throughout the County – provide service in all areas.
- Being from York Region, I don't know if my advice would be all that useful. Nevertheless, from the discussion, I would recommend a County service that provides on-demand/door to door service. Seniors and disabled will need door to door service. Low income riders may not be sufficiently concentrated to warrant regular bus service on dedicated routes. Providing on-demand service will also allow the county to collect information on how much demand is out there and their O-D patterns. If demand is there, you can then decide if a more formal bus route is warranted. P.S. The York Region transit model is a work in progress and needs improvement. Simcoe is unique and needs a customized solution.
- Those who have their own vehicles don't take public transit; it is needed more by those on fixed incomes.
- It is not financially feasible to provide transit if ridership is low.
- If transit is available countywide it could stimulate economic growth in the smaller communities.
- My daughter is unable to drive, she would like to re-locate from Toronto Penetanguishene. She wants independence and not to rely on us or taxis to get groceries, shopping, or doctor's appointments from Penetanguishene, Midland, Barrie and Toronto.
- Seniors pay full taxi fare!
- Key areas not covered at all, i.e. Victoria Harbour and Port McNicoll.
- ODSP getting hardnosed for taxi coverage.

- Cannot get to work if there is no transportation.
- People with low income do not have cars to get them around. High need for public transportation so they can fully participate in activities/opportunities. Great need for accessible transportation outside of Midland.
- People that need transit have to afford it. But concentrate where need is and logistics/value exist.
- I have no vehicle and I am on ODSP. I cannot afford a vehicle. In the summer, I have less problems getting around. I have a friend with a car. I cannot depend on them all the time. In the winter, it is harsh. I would like the odd bus from Stayner to the surrounding towns. Once in a while, I may even want to go to Barrie. There is bus service from Angus to Barrie now. So a bus to Angus from Stayner would enable people without cars to go to Barrie by bus. The costs to keep a vehicle operational is expensive. Insurance around here may not be as high as people pay in the GTA but it is high enough. It is the same insurance zone as Barrie.
- I live in Midhurst which has a high population of Seniors who travel into Barrie for all of their service needs. If they are unable to drive, they become 'stuck' and would have to move. The County Admin. Building and the Board of Ed. building employ many people and are located in Midhurst. A transit service between Barrie and Midhurst might be very well received.
- Start where there is more possibility to be successful
- All people need transportation. Those living in the country as well as already living in the city.
- I believe that by using public subsidies to get the program running, ridership will increase and therefore subsidies required in the future will (hopefully) decrease. High ridership areas will be needed to begin with to promote the service. Once ridership is high (and revenue generated) the transit options may be expanded into key markets (seniors, low-income). But without first gaining ridership, I don't believe the system will flourish. Due to the connectivity of the County (e.g. employment throughout) /I think that service needs to be provided throughout. Focus should be directed to concentrated service areas that are more transit supportive, but do not forget the little areas too. Another option may be to expand the current municipal services beyond the boundaries so that they meet in the middle. For instance, it would be nice if transit from within Barrie expanded outwards into Midhurst. I rely on using a vehicle to get to work every day but wish I had the option of using public transit (both to reduce congestion on the roadways as well as to become more green!).

County's Role in Providing Transit

The third worksheet questions asked participants to indicate the extent to which they felt the County should be involved in providing transit, ranging from maintaining the existing situation in which the County provides some transit funding to local municipalities, funding/providing select inter-municipal connections, or funding/providing transit services across Simcoe.

Nearly nine in ten participants felt that the County should play a greater role in funding/providing transit than they do today, with almost six in ten indicating that the County should fund/provide transit services across Simcoe.

	Maintain existing situation	County funds/provides select inter-municipal transit connections	County funds and/or provides transit services across Simcoe County
Stayner	1	0	3
Bradford	0	3	0
Midhurst (Afternoon)	1	1	3
Midhurst (Stakeholder Meeting)	0	1	0
Midhurst (Evening)	0	0	1
Penetanguishene	1	2	6
Coldwater	0	1	1
Online	1	2	7
Totals	4	10	21

Some participants provided additional comments on why they made their choices regarding the County's role in providing transit. Several participants felt that the need for transit existed across the County and that a County-wide transit service could help stimulate economic growth and improve mobility for all residents by better connecting smaller communities. Others felt that service could start in select areas to help contain costs and raise awareness and then could expand across the county over time. All comments are included in full below.

- Take pride in your county, why leave out sections...
- Settlement areas should be connected with public transit options.
- I live in a rural area – Gilford. I maybe could get a short ride or need a parking lot to meet a bus. An on-demand ride would be better.
- Private companies!; consider GO train expansion north of Barrie.
- I know how costly public transit is but it is so important! It improves quality of life for people and I've lived in Toronto – with public transit you can go almost anywhere! And no... I don't expect the County of Simcoe to run something as extensive as the TTC.
- County should be local coordinating body not operating agency.
- The need for transportation exists across the County.
- In order to connect settlements we need a regional approach to cross/bridge areas between municipalities.
- More transit is always better.
- You have to start in select areas, for cost purposes and awareness to the most people. Orillia-Barrie, Midland-Barrie, Collingwood-Barrie.
- If transit is available county-wide, it could help stimulate economic growth in the smaller communities.
- If services are provided to at least key location points people can get around from there.
- Funding for transit to local municipalities – from Penetanguishene to and from Midland.
- More funding needed.
- As stated before, public transportation needed for people in low income families to access their community.
- Best service at best \$ value – regional makes sense.
- Everyone needs this service
- Penetanguishene Cannot afford this service. We have done without it in the past. Neighbor helps neighbor in need. Folks in our town would be able to shop at Super Store, Cdn. Tire, Walmart, Food Basic and H. Depot adversity impacting our merchants with our tax base seriously eroded. There is no way our merchants can compete against the buying power of the big box stores in Midland. Food Land and Home Hardware cannot stay in business if even a small percentage of their shoppers head to Midland. We need our roads and sidewalks fix not adding another layer of expenses. Operating our Sewage Plant will also kick up expenses. Please let our tax payers vote on this.

NEXT STEPS

Input provided by PIC participants will be used to help inform refinements to the draft vision and the testing and selection of a preferred service concept(s). A second round of public engagement will take place in late fall 2015. During the second round, the Project Team will share information and seek feedback on a prioritization plan, specialized transit and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) considerations, potential fares and funding sources for transit services; and an implementation and financial plan. Participants' input in this second round will be used by the Project Team to help inform the Study's overall draft recommendations, including potential refinements to the preferred service concept in light of prioritization, AODA, funding and implementation considerations.

Appendix A – Public Information Centre Locations

Stayner

June 15th, 2015
2:00 – 4:00pm
Township of Clearview Council Chambers
217 Gideon Street

Bradford

June 15th, 2015
5:00 – 7:00pm
Bradford West Gwillimbury Leisure Centre
125 Simcoe Road

Midhurst – Afternoon

June 16th, 2015
12:00 – 2:00pm
County Museum
1151 Highway 26

Midhurst – Evening

June 16th, 2015
5:00 – 7:00pm
County Museum
1151 Highway 26

Penetanguishene

June 18th, 2015
12:00 – 2:00pm
Village Square Mall
2 Poyntz Street

Coldwater

June 18th, 2015
Coldwater Community Centre
11 Michael Anne Drive

Appendix B – Public Information Centre Notices

Notices to the Public Information Centres were published in local newspapers across the County. The newspaper and the date of the publication is outlined below.

Newspaper	Date of publication
Bradford West Gwillimbury Times	Thursday, June 11, 2015
Innisfil Examiner	Friday, June 12, 2015
Barrie Advance	Thursday, June 11, 2015
Alliston Herald	Thursday, June 11, 2015
Innisfil Journal	Thursday, June 11, 2015
Stayner/Wasaga Sun	Thursday, June 11, 2015
BWG Topic	Thursday, June 11, 2015
Orillia Today	Thursday, June 11, 2015
Midland Mirror	Thursday, June 11, 2015
Collingwood Connection	Thursday, June 11, 2015
Collingwood Enterprise (Town Page)	Friday, June 12, 2015

Appendix C – Local newspaper coverage

[County led transit study moves toward shaping viable options](#), New Tecumseth Free Press, July 21, 2015
[Simcoe County weighing its options for connected transit](#), Bradford West Gwillimbury Topic, June 22, 2015
[County of Simcoe hosting open houses on transit study](#), Barrie Examiner, June 16, 2015
[County looking at Transit options](#), Bradford Times, June 23, 2015

B Stakeholder Group Meeting Summary

Stakeholder Meeting Summary

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

2:30 – 4:00pm

County Museum

1151 Highway 26, Midhurst

OVERVIEW

On June 16th, 2015, Simcoe County hosted a stakeholder meeting as part of its Transit Feasibility and Implementation Study. The purpose of this meeting was to connect with stakeholder organizations whose members, clients and/or customers currently or could potentially use transit services within the county. Representatives from twenty-five organizations participated in the meeting (see attached participant list).

The study team shared information and sought feedback from participants on the preliminary study vision, the different types of transit that could be used on a county-wide level, early thoughts on where new connections could be made, and some ideas on how to assess the different options (see attached agenda).

This summary was written by Swerhun Facilitation, a third-party facilitation firm that is part of the Steer Davies Gleave-led consultant team. This report is not intended to provide a verbatim transcript of the meeting but instead provides a high level summary of the perspectives and advice provided by participants during the facilitated discussions.

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

The perspectives and advice provided by meeting participants has been grouped into the following six categories: Transit Markets, Transit Affordability, the Draft Service Concept, Role of the County, Existing Community Transportation, and Other Service Objectives.

Transit Markets

- It can be hard to offer transit service that is everything to everyone, especially when the service is just starting out. At the same time, it's hard to pick between serving seniors versus people who need transit for work versus people who are going to post-secondary institutions.
- Thinking about the markets that the County is trying to serve through transit can help in the prioritization of services and routes.
- There may be different transit solutions for different parts of the County depending on the distribution of different markets and destinations. For example, some parts of the County have more seniors, or working families or students. Some parts of the county have concentrations of services that could drive ridership.
- Seniors could be a key transit market. Looking into the future, the proportion of seniors in Simcoe is increasing and there will be a lot of retirement communities. Right now people might have higher incomes and multiple vehicles, but as they get older they might not drive as much and they will need transportation options.
- Youth who are just under driving age or who do not have regular access to a vehicle could also be a key market. Providing transit that would help youth move around Simcoe would allow them to stay for extracurricular programs without having to rely on their parents driving them home. Wasaga Beach had a six month pilot program where they reduced fares for children and students, leading to increased ridership without a dramatic impact on overall revenues.
- Commuters are a third key market that can be served by County-wide transit. A commuter-aimed transit service needs to be reliable, accessible and have longevity (i.e. it must operate at least one year) to get people to shift modes. People need to be able to count on the service so they can get to work every day.

- Pilot programs can be useful for helping establish transit ridership. In order for a pilot to be successful, it must run for a significant length of time (i.e. longer than a year) for people to consider giving up their car.
- It is important to keep in mind that there are many potential users that would have different needs than people who would use transit every day to get to work. For example, people with lower incomes need transportation to connect to a host of different destinations. If a transit service is designed around commuters, with hubs located in areas of higher employment, lower income users may not have access to community resources they require.
- There may be an income line in the county where over that line people won't use transit because they have enough money for a personal vehicle. If there is this threshold, transit service should look to primarily meet social and community objectives—rather than maximizing ridership and revenue.

Transit Affordability

- An affordable service will help boost ridership. Determining what affordability means involves looking at the wages of those that might use transit. Many lower income individuals served by community organizations are working part-time at minimum wage or are receiving Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Payments and need fares to be as inexpensive as they can be so they're not spending a large proportion of their income on transportation.
- Determining affordability should also take account of the cost of transit relative to the cost of car ownership. To make transit attractive on a cost basis, it has to be priced so that it is less expensive than owning a car, taking into account for the monetary costs of car ownership (e.g. gas, insurance and vehicle repair/replacement) and the non-monetary costs of transit (e.g. decrease in freedom of immediate mobility).
- A zone system may be an option to keep fares affordable by reducing fare distortions that can lead to sprawl/inefficient locational decisions. On the other hand a zone system can make existing long-distance trips unaffordable and/or make some routes less accessible to low income passengers.

Draft Service Concept

- Consider adding a stronger/more direct arrow between Collingwood and Barrie – there's likely a good potential for trips to the Royal Victoria Hospital and Georgian College in Barrie.
- Regarding the Orillia urban fringe connection, there was formerly a transit service that ran between Washago and Orillia—it operated a significant amount of time but it was shut down about 4 years ago because of financial constraints.
- Consider adding an inter-county connection between Wabauschene and Port Severn. Wabauschene has a fairly significant population.
- Consider expanding the urban fringe connection to cover the area between Penetanguishene and Midland – they are undertaking a feasibility study to test linkages between them.
- The connections between Alliston and Barrie, and Alliston and Angus are important for employment and education purposes. There is a need for more transportation options.

Role of the County

- Consider first determining where there is demand for transit service, then determine the delivery model based on the scale and the geographic distribution of the demand. In some places, it may make better sense for other service providers (instead of the County) to directly operate the service. In other places, the County might play a more direct role.
- The County could play a key role in ensuring integration between different service areas and delivery models. Integrated service will help encourage more people to use the system.
- Helping ensure integration could mean assisting with wayfinding and trip planning. There are many trips that would use multiple transit services (e.g. travelling from Orillia to the Greater Toronto Area would include taking the Ontario Northland bus to Barrie, Barrie Transit to the GO station and GO Transit to the GTA). Having to know the routes and schedules for multiple transit systems can be difficult for riders.

- The County could also be involved in fare technology, fare integration and/or fare subsidies between services. Something like a County smart farecard (like PRESTO currently being adopted in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area and in Ottawa) could be useful to make it easier for people to connect between different transit services, as long as it was also convenient and affordable for lower income users. With or without smart card technologies, integrated fare policies (i.e. discounts for passengers using more than one transit system) may also be a consideration to support travel in all areas of the Simcoe region.
- The County could consider expanding the Ontario Works pilot program that is operating in Collingwood and Wasaga beach. Through this program, Ontario Works provides transit passes to clients to use on the Collingwood-Wasaga inter-municipal system. This pilot has saved Ontario Works approximately \$100,000 because they no longer have to pay as much in taxi fares for clients. It also offers greater flexibility to clients as they don't have to schedule rides.

Existing Community Transportation

- Consider partnerships with existing social service agencies that are already providing transit in the County (there are approximately 40 transportation providers across the County).
- The Canadian Red Cross provides door to door service for seniors and serves a several hundred clients per week. Trips are made throughout the County and beyond to Hamilton and Toronto for example.
- United Way Greater Simcoe County provides funding to Community Reach (a volunteer-run organization) who in turn have 400 registered riders through the Ontario Works program and provide transportation all across the County and Greater Toronto Area.
- There may be a potential to maximize the use of school board buses. For example, there are buses that provide service to French Immersion students that are under capacity and that could perhaps also provide service to other members of the population. If these buses were to be used to provide broader service, they would have to be accessible.

Other Service Objectives

- Regular access to transit could help expand affordable housing. There are places in the County with affordable housing but people have difficulty travelling around because of a lack of transportation options.
- Linking transit to active transportation networks should be considered through the study.

NEXT STEPS

The meeting concluded with study team thanking participants for their feedback. The study team committed to providing participants with a copy of the presentation and a link to the Part One online questionnaire. Participants were reminded that Part Two of the consultation process will take place in late fall 2015 and will focus on implementing the preferred service concept.

Stakeholder Meeting Participants List

The following is a list of organizations that participated in the Stakeholder Meeting.

1. Barrie Cycling Club
2. Canadian National Institute for the Blind
3. Canadian Red Cross
4. City of Barrie
5. Community Reach
6. CONTACT Community Services (South Simcoe)
7. FOCUS Community Development Corporation
8. Helping Hands Orillia
9. Ministry of Transportation
10. Niagara Escarpment Commission
11. North Simcoe Community Futures Development Corporation
12. Ontario Disability Support Program
13. Simcoe County District School Board
14. Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium
15. Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
16. Tourism Simcoe
17. Town of Collingwood
18. Town of Midland
19. Town of New Tecumseth
20. Town of Penetanguishene
21. Town of Wasaga Beach
22. Township of Springwater
23. Township of Tay
24. United Way Greater Simcoe County
25. York Region

Stakeholder Meeting Agenda

- | | |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2:30pm | Welcome
Debbie Korolnek, General Manager, Engineering, Planning and Environment |
| 2:35 | Introductions and Agenda Review
Alex Heath, Swerhun Facilitation |
| 2:40 | Overview Presentation
Matthew Lee, Steer Davies Gleave |
| 3:10 | Facilitated Discussion

Focus Questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How, when and why your members, clients and/or customers travel around the county? Do you have your own transportation program?2. What do you think a county-wide transit service should achieve?3. What places within the county need to be better connected by transit?4. What are some funding and service partnerships that could be explored if county-wide transit services are offered? |
| 3:55 | Next Steps |
| 4:00 | Adjourn |

Control Sheet

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