



Advisory Committee Name: <i>Accessibility</i>	
Name of Member:	Jeannie Meyer
Topic for Discussion:	Transit Accessibility (A)
Date of Meeting:	September 11, 2024
	Staff Support: Deputy Clerk & Accessibility Coordinator
Details:	
<p>After reading through the reports from Rachel Barber and EXP and then performing cursory research on on-demand services in Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay, Ottawa, and Espanola (whether they were accessibility-oriented or transit efficiency-oriented) and being that this committee is aware of the state of accessibility of all the components (stops, shelters, locations, routes, etc.) and the interplay of these components in which real and perceived barriers can be readily forecast for transit riders with accessible needs, I would like to put forward the following proposal:</p> <p>The City of Elliot Lake entertain the proposal for a fully on-demand transit service that utilizes ride-share programs such as VIA with pick-up and drop-off locations at residential and business street addresses (as well as landmarks such as parks). Common terminology is door-to-door service; however, this is inaccurate as it is a point-to-point service.</p> <p>Please see attached.</p>	

General Program Highlights

1. The City of Elliot Lake has the opportunity to be at the forefront of innovation while supporting and promoting established priorities in community development and growth including accessibility.
2. Remove bus stops with no further requirements for maintenance or accessibility compliance. Bus shelters can be reutilized at public parks or for parts. Static route planning becomes extraneous.
3. Increased convenience may spurn new ridership. All citizens within the City of Elliot Lake's service area have equal access to transit.
4. Opportunity to purchase/lease passenger vans with less financial and maintenance costs. Current vehicles can be "reserved" for Ontario Northland connections in which less wear and tear occurs along the highway route. As passenger vans are brought online, buses can be removed from regular service and utilized for select routes such as above preserving the life of the vehicle.
 - a. Examples of Vehicles:
 - i. 2024 Ford Transit® Passenger Van XLT
 - ii. 2024 RAM 3500 WINDOW VAN HIGH ROOF EXTENDED 159 IN. WB
5. This program could create new employment opportunities. Ride-share programs operate in a time-frame format and not a direct route format; therefore, this service will not diminish private taxi enterprises.
6. No change would be required (although functional fare cards would be beneficial) to fee and fare setups.
7. Enhanced services that could be implemented with this program include the expansion to service for special events and city meetings.

General Program Concerns

1. There will be more variability with pick-up and drop-off timing; however, this is offset by the fact that these points are typically sheltered.

Accessibility Program Highlights

1. All General Program Highlights.
2. Specialized passenger vans can be purchased specifically for riders who have registered as having a permanent/ongoing disability with the benefit of being able to register temporary accessible transit needs (such as when one breaks a foot or leg).
 - a. Examples of Vehicles:
 - i. 2024 Ram Promaster Wheelchair Accessible Vans
 - ii. 2024 Ford Passenger Van XLT with Conversion
3. Drivers and vehicles can be assigned to the accessible vehicle program that operates at the same standards as the general program with fewer bookings and capacity per half-hour time slot.
4. This program promotes universal accessibility throughout our city.

Accessibility Program Concerns

1. Residents would be responsible for their access to ingress and egress for transit. This would remain the status quo.
 - a. Example:
 - i. Clearing a path from their door to the road (already a private citizen's responsibility).

Suggestions:

1. Take static routes offline as vans come online- one by one with plenty of notice, advertising, and education plans **OR** implement a program on weekends and evenings and slowly expand service times.
2. Stakeholder identification includes (but is not limited to): Council, AAC, Age-Friendly, AJ Bus Lines, Huron Lodge, Transit Drivers, ELNOS, ELRL, ADSAB, Transit Riders, Treasury Department and the taxpayers of the City of Elliot Lake.