

Lanark County & Smiths Falls Rural Transit Feasibility Study

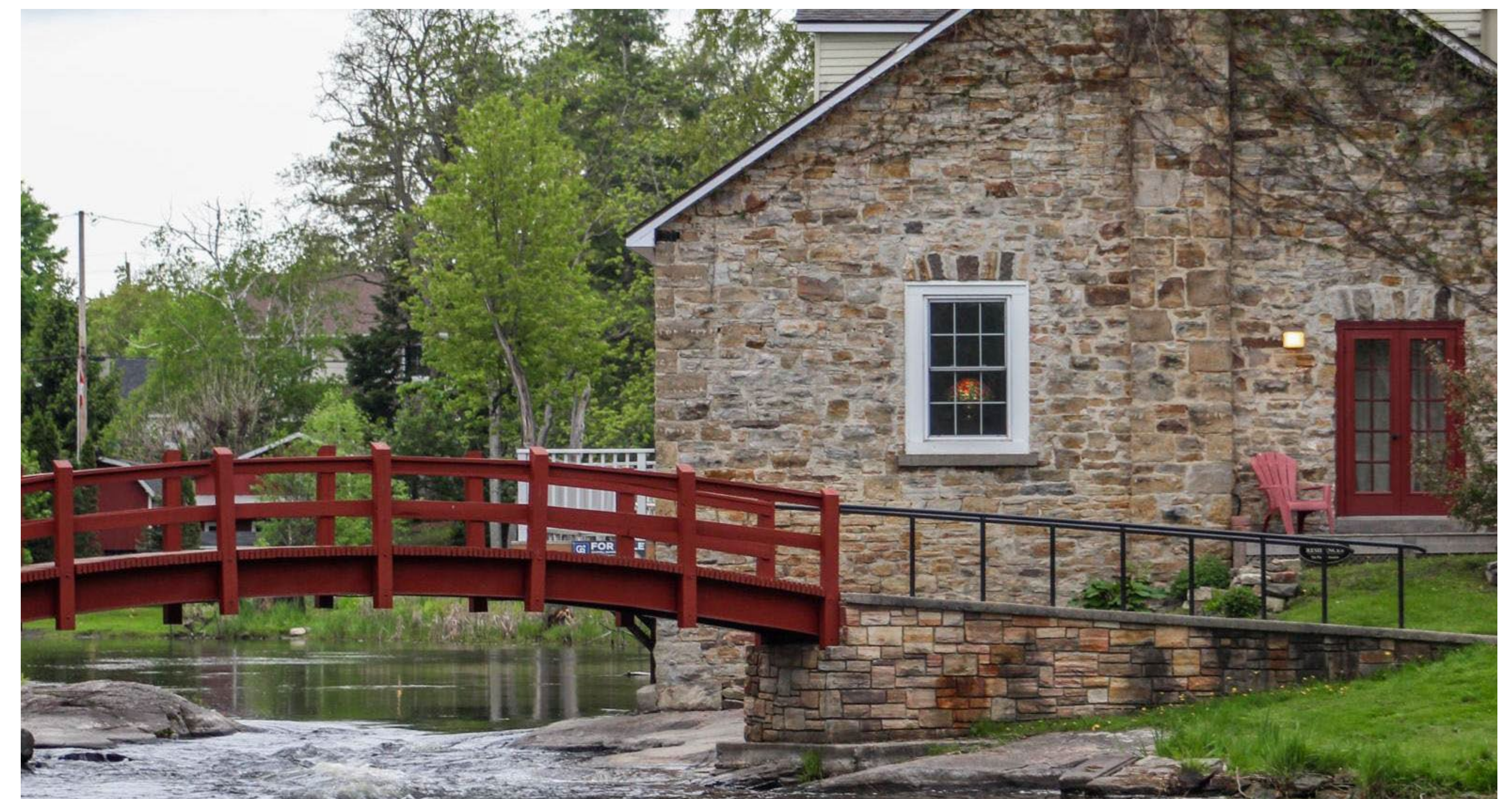
Presentation to County Council

December 2025

Study Introduction

- This study explores the feasibility of public transit for Lanark County & Smiths Falls
- It examines the unique travel needs of the communities
- Studies public & stakeholder engagement, best practices, challenges & opportunities, existing transportation services, trip generators, travel demand patterns
- Provides transit service recommendations, implementation guidance, financial planning, next steps

Many rural communities are experiencing a lack of consistent and efficient public transit options, making it difficult for residents to access essential services, employment, and education.



Existing Transportation Context

Existing Services



Lanark Transportation
Door-to-door “dial-a-ride” system operated by a nonprofit organization



Flixbus and Rider Express
Private intercity bus companies providing service to Ottawa from Carleton Place and Perth



Via Rail
National rail service connecting Smiths Falls to Ottawa, Brockville, and Kingston



OC Transpo
No service in Lanark County following COVID cancellation of Regional Partner Routes

Service challenges

- Advance preparation and long lead-up times required for booking trips on Lanark Transportation
- Long-distance trips on LT are expensive for users that do not qualify for subsidies
- Few taxi options exist for spontaneous travel in settlement areas
- Intercity bus and rail services only connect to a few communities
- Intercity schedules are not designed for same-day round trips

Demographic and Travel Demand Analysis



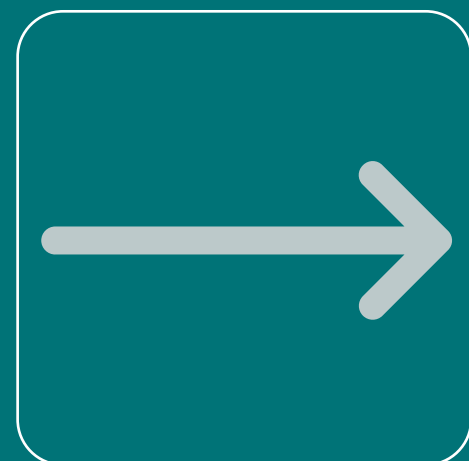
No clearly dominant activity centre or dominant travel pattern



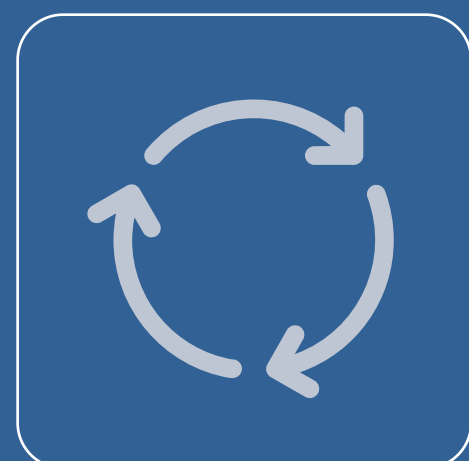
Generally older populations than the provincial average



Highest observed equity needs in Smiths Falls, Perth, Lanark Highlands, and Tay Valley



The attraction of Ottawa is strongest in the County's east

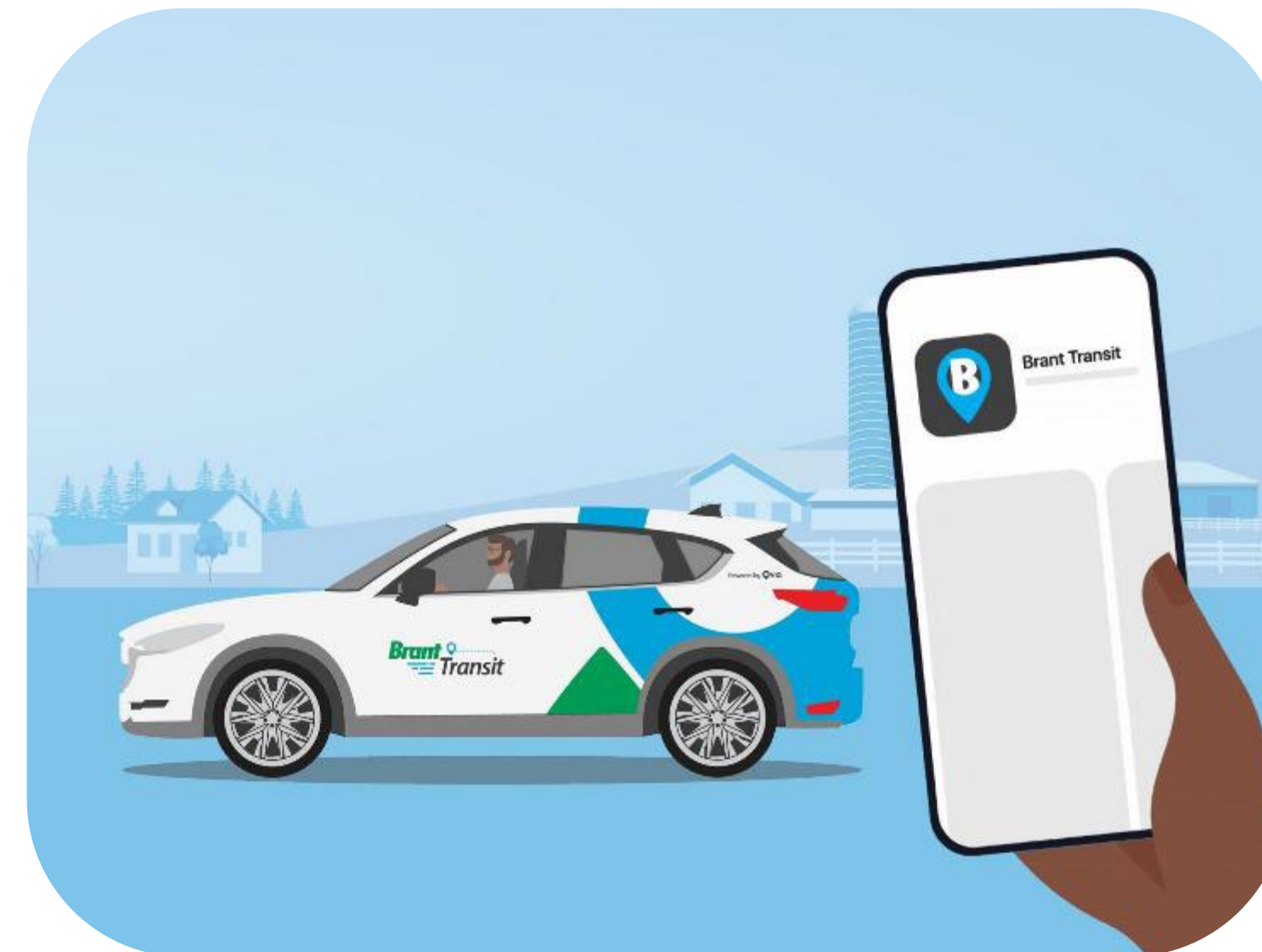


Demand is generally higher for in-County trips than Ottawa-bound trips

Best Practices Review



NG Transit (North Grenville)



Brant Transit (Brant County)



Ride Norfolk (Norfolk County)



Muskoka Community Transit (District of Muskoka)

Key takeaways:

- On-demand services have been successful in similar communities
- On-demand transit can serve large, dispersed areas like Lanark County & Smiths Falls
- Fixed routes require high-demand corridors with major communities as “anchor” points
- Operations of rural and small-community systems are usually contracted out
- Fares are a mix of flat rates and zone-based fares

Public & Stakeholder Engagement

Two phases of public engagement

- Public survey
- 3 outreach pop-up sessions
- 1 stakeholder workshop

Key Sentiments

- Majority of respondents supported introducing an improved transit service
- Need for improved accessibility
- Public Transit services would allow for aging in place
- Connections to multiple communities is valuable due to a wide distribution of jobs and services
- Solutions need to be financially sustainable
- Start small and scale up if the service is successful



Recommended Transit Service Model

- Serves dispersed travel patterns more effectively than fixed route transit
- Enables more complete service coverage of rural and remote areas
- Allows riders to choose between multiple directions of travel and provides additional flexibility for travel times
- Provides door-to-door service for seniors and residents with mobility limitations
- The software allows for data collection of travel patterns, ridership to better plan for expansion and growth

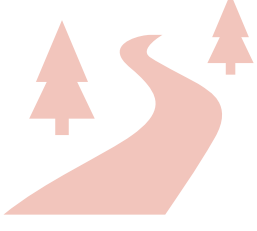
*Through a comprehensive process combining a review of demographic and travel demand information, stakeholder & public engagement and an examination of best practices an **on-demand transit model is recommended***

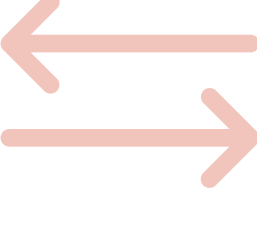


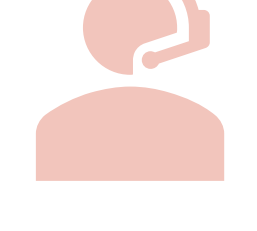
Recommended Service Operator


Lanark Transportation have confirmed their willingness to enhance and broaden the partnership with Lanark County and Smiths Falls


Benefits of a partnership with Lanark Transportation?


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Preserves and makes use of institutional experience operating transportation in the community over many years
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Minimizes potential duplication between two or more service operators
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Allows Lanark Transportation to improve efficiency of the existing dial-a-ride service
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Potential service quality improvements for existing Lanark Transportation users
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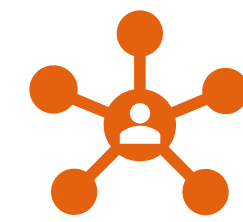
Maximizes efficient use of existing vehicle fleet and reduces the need to buy new vehicles
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Phone booking capability maintains access for seniors and others who can't use digital booking platforms
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Selecting Lanark Transportation aligns with industry (CUTA) guidelines on implementation of on-demand transit



Transit On-Demand Service Design



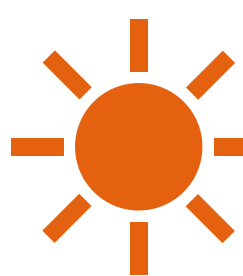
Door-to-door transportation service



Starting service span of 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays



Launching Saturday service provides improved travel options for **existing LT users**



Bookings would be required a day in advance to guarantee a trip



Same-day bookings would be **allowed**, but would **not be guaranteed** if they could not fit within the day's schedule

Recommended Fare Structure

Recommended fare structure

A zone-based system:



Option 1: Current Fare Structure

Riders are advised of the cost when they book

Average cost of \$31.48 per trip and 84¢ per km according to 2024 financial statements

Cost can be high for riders who do not qualify for subsidized fares

Option 2: Proposed Fare Structure

Riders would have a clear idea of the cost before they book their trip

Zone 1 (0–10 km): \$6 per trip

Zone 2 (11–25 km): \$15 per trip

Zone 3 (26+ km): \$25 per trip

Designed to enhance affordability, make the service more accessible, and drive ridership gains



Operating Costs

	Existing Fare Structure	Alternate Fare Structure
Annual Ridership	25,000 to 31,000	25,000 to 31,000
Annual Operating Costs	\$1.7M - \$2.1M	\$1.7M - \$2.1M
Estimated Revenue	\$1.35M - \$1.6M	\$854,000 - \$944,000
Net Municipal Cost	\$351,000 - \$550,000	\$855,000 - \$1.2M

- Annual Ridership: Estimated based on per capita ridership rates of peer systems
- Annual Operating Costs: Includes administration, on-road operations, maintenance, fuel, and marketing
- Estimated Revenue: Includes projected fares based on average fare collected, Gas Tax, and other contributions

Capital Costs

Proposed Year One Capital Costs	Cost Estimate
Transit Growth Fleet	\$300,000
Transit Replacement Fleet	\$228,000
On-Demand Software Provider	\$30,000
Total Capital Cost	\$558,000

- Transit Growth Fleet: Consists of an additional accessible bus per discussion with LT
- Transit Replacement Fleet: Assumes regular renewal of fleet vehicles based on industry standard usable life
- On-Demand Software: Licensing rates based on peer comparable systems

Implementation and Monitoring of Service

Implementation

- Additional staffing needs for Lanark Transportation
- Oversight of Lanark Transportation contract
- Division of responsibilities between Lanark County, Smiths Falls, and Lanark Transportation
- Software procurement of on-demand transportation software
- Marketing and Communications to raise awareness of the service

Monitoring Service

- Report back to Councils on service
- Key Performance Indicators
 - Set standards to measure rider experience and overall health of service
 - Anticipate and respond to operational issues
 - Monitor financial health of service
 - Monitor demand to ensure community's expectations are met
- Develop guidelines to inform future decisions on service changes



Conclusion

On-demand transit is the best option towards pursuing expanded public transportation in Lanark County

- Reflects best practices from peers and community feedback
- Adequate service to meet anticipated demand
- Deploys vehicles where they are needed when they are needed
- Enhances community mobility equitably through a widely distributed population
- Serves many demographics and trip purposes to open economic opportunities to the region

Lanark Transportation is best-positioned to continue to provide transportation services

- Has local knowledge and existing resources to continue to deliver service in Lanark County and Smiths Falls

Considerations for Implementing Service

- Level of investment, including fares to be charged
- Marketing new service offerings
- Monitoring service to measure success of investment and plan for any long-term service adjustments

Thank You!



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