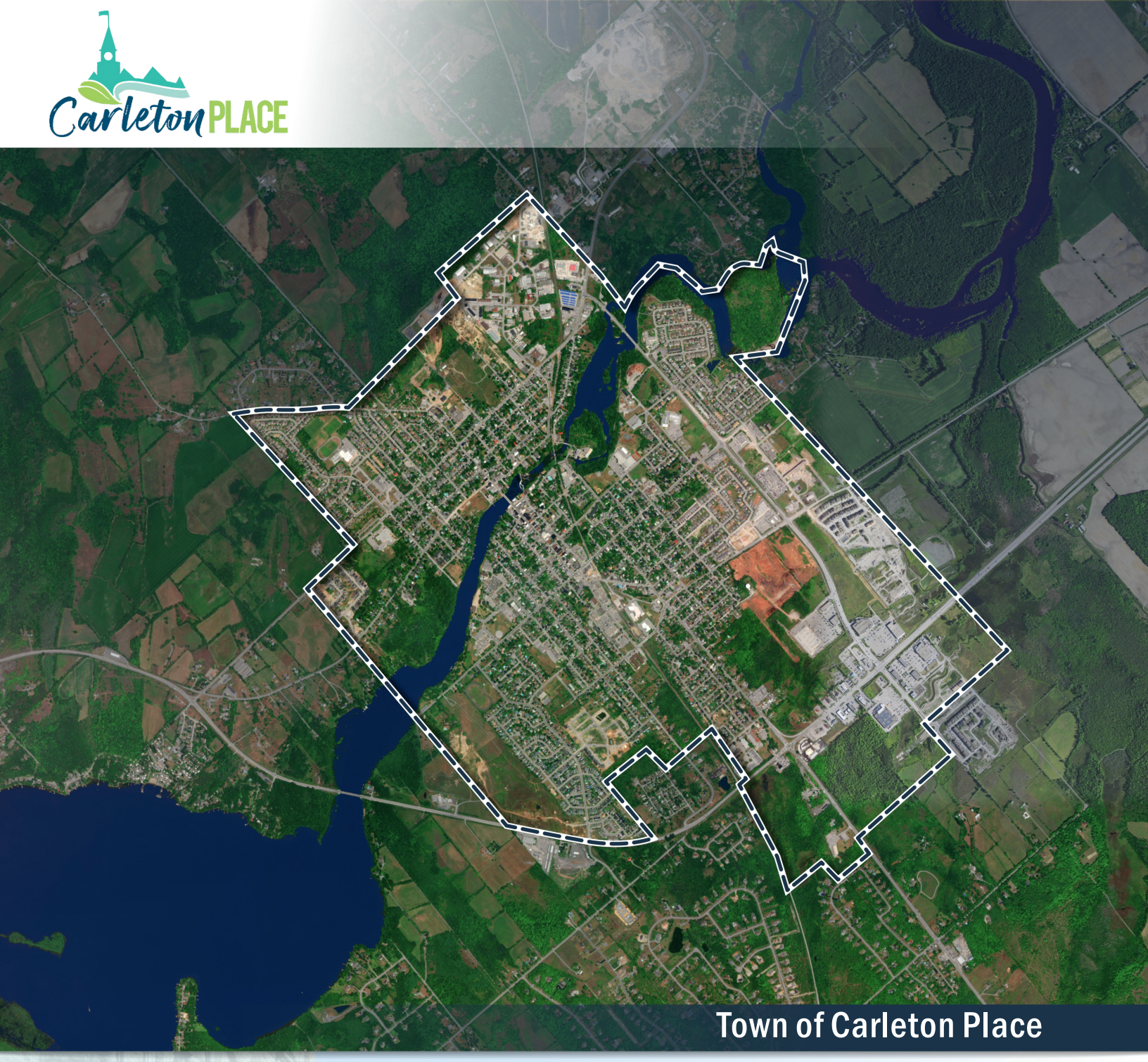
Carleton PLACE



Town of Carleton Place

# Transit Feasibility Study

PARSONS

# Carleton Place Transit Feasibility Study

Final Report

October 2025

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*The Town of Carleton Place Transit Feasibility Study could not have been completed without the efforts of the many individuals and groups who contributed ideas, solutions, and thoughtful debate to the study process. Every conversation throughout the course of the study helped to shape the direction and the recommendations contained within it. The project team would like to thank the members of the public who attended the public information centre, completed survey, and contacted the project team to contribute their ideas to the Carleton Place Transit Feasibility Study. We would also like to thank the Working Group for providing their time, insights, and knowledge throughout the study.*

## DISCLAIMER

*The information and data contained herein represents Parsons' best professional judgment in light of the knowledge and information available to Parsons at the time of preparation. The financial information provided in this document reflects Parsons' judgement based on the information available at the time of preparation of this document and the circumstances in which the information was collected, processed, made, or issued. Changes in market or other conditions, or other unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of Parsons, may significantly impact any findings contained herein. Actual final Project costs may differ from the cost estimate provided in this document.*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Carleton Place has prepared a Transit Feasibility Study (TFS) to determine the unmet travel needs of residents and visitors to Carleton Place, and to develop public transportation solutions designed to address those needs. This feasibility study was recommended as part of the Transportation Master Plan (2022) to investigate opportunities to develop, enhance or expand transit service. There is currently no local transit service offered by the Town, however, Lanark County provides transportation services through *Ride the LT* to residents of Carleton Place once a week.

The Town is experiencing significant population and employment growth, with population growth expected to reach approximately 21,500 in the next 20 years [(1)]. Approximately 40% of the Town's population consists of seniors and youth under the age of 15 years of age with potential to have greater need for transit. In terms of workplace, approximately 40% of all residents work within Carleton Place, but the majority of all residents rely on cars for commuting trips. Carleton place is also approximately 50 km from Ottawa, making it a gateway Town connecting Ottawa to Lanark County. The City of Ottawa is also the largest employment draw for the Town, almost 45% of residents are employed in the City. With the cost of vehicle ownership increasing, there is a greater desire for more affordable and equitable travel choices. Technology has also advanced, enabling innovative solutions that make public transport more feasible for small urban and rural municipalities.

The scope of the study included the following:

- Consider transit needs and opportunities between neighbouring communities and regional destinations.
- Adopt a two-phased public and stakeholder engagement process to understand the Town's diverse travel wants and needs.
- Forecast ridership for the recommended transit system.
- Identify and evaluate a variety of transit service options to serve the Town of Carleton Place.
- Develop a transit solution that is realistic, achievable, affordable, and in line with community and stakeholder interests.
- Create a comprehensive framework and work program to implement transit over time, including high-level cost estimates for the selected transit system.

## ENGAGEMENT

Multiple public consultation and stakeholder engagement opportunities were offered throughout the duration of the study. These events were published through the project website, social media, CP Scoop notices, and consisted of an online community survey, a single stakeholder working group meeting, a single public information centre, and two presentations with the Committee of the Whole. All the comments, input, and feedback from stakeholders and the public were grouped, and assessed to help inform the recommendations in the Transit Feasibility Study.

## NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITY

The Town of Carleton Place is one of the fastest growing municipalities within Lanark County and this trend is anticipated to continue in the next 20 years. The Town will need to respond to these driving forces in order to develop a transportation system that meets the community's future needs. The main overarching transportation needs for the Town include:

[1] Town of Carleton Place Development Charges Background Study, 2024

### Local Transit

- The Town of Carleton Place has been one of the fastest growing municipalities within Lanark County over the last 15 years. This growth trend is expected to continue with the population expected to reach approximately 21,500 in the next 20 years. In response to this anticipated growth, The Town intends to increase medium-to-high density properties to strengthen and diversify Carleton Place's housing stock and complement existing land uses and community hubs. This indicates the Town is evolving as there is potential opportunity to support sustainable transportation options.
- The Town's population consists of residents who tend to have a greater need for transit service such as seniors and young people under 15 years of age.
- Approximately 40% of residents work in Carleton Place with 1/3 of commuter travel being less than 15 minutes, which presents another opportunity to reduce reliance on private vehicles and alleviate pressure on key local roads.
- Current transportation services are scattered, and residents might not be familiar with these limited transportation options. This presents an opportunity to provide residents and visitors with a centralized transit service that is competitive, affordable and accessible for all ages, abilities and groups.

The development of the transit service would need to be gradual and affordable keeping in mind that for small municipalities initial capital and operating costs are barriers, therefore, financial support is required to provide such services. There are success stories observed in other municipalities (such as North Grenville, Town of Okotoks) that have encouraged other municipalities (such as City of Pembroke) to embark on providing sustainable transportation options for their residents through a gradual approach and the support of various funding sources and through the municipal budget.

### Regional Commuter Transit

- Carleton Place is approximately 50 km from downtown Ottawa, making it the gateway Town connecting Ottawa to Lanark County. The City of Ottawa is also the largest employment draw for the Town with almost 45% of residents being employed in the City. With the Federal, Provincial and many municipal governments mandating/encouraging employees to work more often from the office in the coming months, there will be a growing need for daily commuting to Ottawa.
- OC Transpo LRT (west extension) will be closer to Carleton Place with the anticipated opening of Moodie LRT station in 2027. Integrating with the OC Transpo system, at least to the LRT station on the Confederation Line (Moodie Station as part of Stage 2), would be a great opportunity and essential to attract commuters by reducing transfer times and overall travel time.

It is understood that commuter services were tried before but failed due to lack of demand (although the lowest demand was experienced during the Covid 19 pandemic). Taxation increases associated with public transportation will be a primary concern to residents of Carleton Place. However, with available funding opportunities that may potentially reduce cost burdens, other municipalities such as North Grenville will launch their commuter service soon (September 2025) to Limebank Station. Therefore, with a more gradual approach and available funding, it is feasible to provide a municipal transit system to address those regional needs.

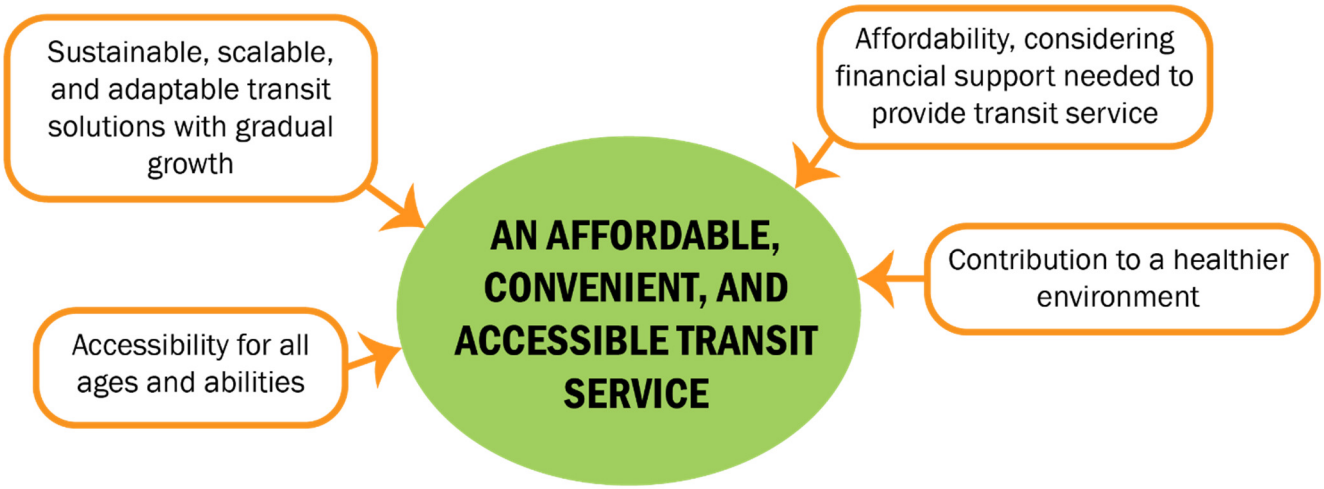
## TRANSIT VISION FOR CARLETON PLACE

The Carleton Place transit study was guided by the following vision and priorities grafted through consultation with the Town project manager, stakeholders and members of the public. The transit service aims to provide affordable, equitable and accessible transit to users of all ages and abilities that promote high quality life for residents. The transit solution would:

- be **accessible** to people of all ages and abilities; promotes equity in transportation.
- be **sustainable, scalable** and **adaptable** starting small and growing gradually to address the needs and challenges of the Town.

- prioritize **affordability** for both taxpayers and passengers, keeping in mind that financial support would be needed to provide a transit service.
- reduce GHG emissions and contribute to a **healthier** environment.

Figure ES-1: Transit Vision and Priorities




## RECOMMENDED TRANSIT SOLUTION FOR CARLETON PLACE

Through responses received through public and stakeholder engagement, discussions with Town staff, and review of the alternative transit approaches, it is recommended that the Town of Carleton Place implement a single hybrid transit solution that comprises of two components, a **regional express commuter transit route to Ottawa during peak periods that would transition to local on-demand service during off-peak periods**.

The transit service would be introduced as a **three-year pilot project using a turnkey solution**. The contractor would provide a single vehicle (plus one spare vehicle) to accommodate the hybrid solution as outlined below:

- During **the peak periods**, the vehicle would operate as a commuter service to Ottawa during weekdays (Monday to Friday) with 2 outbound trips during morning peak period and 2 inbound trips during afternoon peak period. The service would start at Carleton Place Arena with direct service to Moodie LRT station.
- During **the off-peak period**, the vehicle would provide local on-demand service within the Carleton Place's boundary limits. The service would run 6 days a week with the following proposed schedule:
  - Monday-Friday: 9:30am to 4pm and 7pm to 10pm; and
  - Saturday: 8am to 10 pm.

The preferred delivery method for the new transit service is a turnkey solution provided by a third-party contractor. The third-party contractor would be responsible for providing operating staff, customer service, booking software and vehicle maintenance. This delivery model would last through the pilot project phase, upon which the Town may continue with this model or adopt an alternative approach. Advantages of a turnkey solution is it reduces upfront costs to the municipality, lowers financial risk, and leverages expertise, assets and experiences from industry professionals that increases the likelihood of success and optimal performance from Day 1.

Once the Town gains experience and understanding of the requirements and procedures associated with the transit service, some responsibilities could shift to the Town when the pilot project phase comes to its conclusion. This may include vehicle ownership

and maintenance where the Town can purchase their own vehicle once the pilot project ends. There are several capital funds that the Town can take advantage of, which would minimize capital and operating cost burdens. During the pilot project, the Town should evaluate their current maintenance staff and facilities to confirm providing vehicle maintenance will be feasible and would not require significant investment beyond the current projections for staff and fleet requirements. Table ES-1 provides a summary of the contractor's responsibilities when delivering the new transit service.

Table ES-1: Contractor's Responsibility – Turnkey Solution Pilot Project

| Contractor's Responsibility | Description |
|---|---|
| Operations Staff | The Town can retain a transit service contractor who will provide trained drivers, customer service, policies and procedures for the new transit service. The contractor will be the point of contact that Town staff can reach for any concerns or questions. The municipality would not be required to provide additional staff, but it is recommended to assign someone (whether new or an existing staff member) to be the point of contact with the contractor, the public, internal staff and the Council. |
| Vehicle Ownership and Maintenance | The contractor will provide a single primary vehicle with a capacity of 16-to-20 people to serve both commuter during peak periods and local on-demand during off-peak periods.<br>It is also recommended that a backup vehicle be provided to ensure no disruption in service in case of maintenance issues. The Town would not require any vehicle insurance or be responsible for vehicle maintenance. This would provide an advantage to the Town should vehicle requirements change during the contract, where the contractor can readily be available to respond to changes. In terms of vehicle storage, the Town would likely be responsible to store the vehicle. The Town may consider municipal facilities such as the Carleton Place Arena or Carambeck Community Centre to house a designated parking space for these vehicles during non-operating hours. |
| Customer Service and Booking System | The contractor would provide booking software to support on-demand booking requests for both local and commuter service through various methods that include an online app, website or telephone during all hours of operations.<br>The contractor is expected to provide support to AODA eligible customers and will also be responsible for collecting customer feedback/rating of the service for the Town to monitor customer satisfaction. |
| Management of Daily Operations | The contactor would be responsible for managing daily operations of the transit service. This would include supervision, monitoring vehicles in service, a fare collection system (collected, stored securely on board if cash payment is an option), a booking and routing system capable of supporting real-time booking requests and monitoring on-time performance. The contractor would also be responsible for responding to issues in service to support drivers and customers to ensure a quick return to service. |

## FINANCIAL FORECASTS

Transit ridership will take several years to mature. Steady growth and adoption require a simple structure and fare system for users to understand, including education and marketing strategies to build awareness and foster loyalty. Particularly in small municipalities where there is long-standing reliance on personal vehicles, it will take time to change, grow awareness and trust in the service. This section provides details on fare structure, ridership and revenue projections.

### Recommended Fare Structure

A well-structured fare system is critical to a successful transit service; it directly affects revenue and ridership, and municipalities must take great care to strike the right balance between financial return and affordability for the user. A balanced fare structure will be inclusive and equitable for all residents as well as financially sustainable for the municipality to ensure it is an enduring service. Table ES-2 outlines a potential fare structure for the local on-demand service and the regional commuter service:

Table ES-2: Proposed Fare Structure by Transit Service

| | Local On-Demand | Regional Ottawa Commuter Service |
|---|---|---|
| **Single Trip** | $3 | $9 |
| **Monthly Pass** | $55 | $215 |

**Ages 12 and under: Free*

- **Local On-Demand**: The proposed fare structure aligns with industry peers for a local service within the urban core; it would operate on much shorter trips for customers within Carleton Place. The monthly pass is based on the cost factor to the single trip fare, assuming a certain number of monthly trips before an individual breaks even [2].
- **Regional Commuter Service:** The proposed regional commuter service will leverage the soon-to-be completed Stage 2 LRT: Confederation West Line by the City of Ottawa. It is expected to be operational by 2027. OC Transpo has confirmed that the Moodie LRT Station (the westernmost station) bus loop would be a fare-paid zone. This would mean that the Town of Carleton Place would need to enter into a fare agreement with OC Transpo to permit access.

  Initial discussions with OC Transpo suggest there are grounds to establish an agreement; one option is OC Transpo charge Carleton Place boarding and alighting in the fare-paid zone based on riders carried, which is the single adult fare of $4.00 each way. Further discussions between the Town and OC Transpo need to take place to flush-out potential fare strategies and logistics prior to implementation.

For the purposes of this study, assuming a $4.00 surcharge to OC Transpo the proposed fare structure for a single commuter trip was set at $9[3], which includes one-way fare on OC Transpo train or bus at Moodie Station. Should an alternative connection point other than the Moodie Station be selected during implementation, where a fare agreement is not required, the cost of the single trip can be set at a lower value closer at $5. The monthly pass has been set at $215, which assumes to include OC Transpo pass [4]. **The pass for commuters provides the added benefit of unlimited access to all services (local and commuter).** Again, details on the fare agreement and logistics need to be flushed out with OC Transpo and third-party contractor prior to implementation.

### Ridership and Financial Forecasts

For analysis purposes, the annual revenue for the transit service was estimated based on the single fare ticket purchase, which may provide an optimal revenue estimate. However, should the Town choose to provide incentives such as monthly passes and ticket bundles, the revenue estimates may fluctuate. This may increase the revenue stream by encouraging more riders through these incentives to use the system or result in a lower revenue stream if more users choose to take advantage of these discounts and incentives.

The operating cost for the first three years is based on a review of peer municipalities and speaking with industry vendors. These operating costs are subject to change based on market conditions. Based on the ridership forecast and net operating annual costs, the net cost per capita was determined for each of the years. As the transit service matures, net cost per capita is anticipated to reduce over the course of the three years. Similarly, the cost recovery is anticipated to increase as ridership increases over time. Typically, the cost recovery for small municipalities with similar transit service ranges between 10%-15%, which aligns with industry peers, with steady growth over time. The net operating cost can be further minimized by funding opportunities that the municipality can take advantage of, which may include Gas Tax Revenues [5].

[2] North Grenville currently charges $70 for their monthly pass which translates to a cost factor of 14 trips per month with single trip cost of $5 given it covers much larger area. Similarly, Okotoks currently charges $55 for their monthly pass with a single trip cost of $3.5, which translates to cost factor of approximately 16 trips per month.
[3] The cost was set at $9, which assumes Carleton Place would profit $5 and the remaining $4 would be paid back to OC Transpo.
[4] Adult OC Transpo Pass is $135 (2025 rate)
[5] It should be noted that North Grenville has received approximately $60,000 through the Gas Tax program in both 2023-24 and 2024-25 allocations.

Table ES-3: Predicted Financial Performance

| | 2027 | | 2028 | | 2029 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Low | High | Low | High | Low | High |
| Total Annual Ridership | 7,900 | 15,600 | 14,400 | 23,300 | 22,100 | 31,100 |
| **Total Annual Revenue** | **$31,700** | **$62,600** | **$57,300** | **$93,500** | **$88,200** | **$124,700** |
| **Operating Cost** | **$500,000** | | **$525,000** | | **$551,300** | |
| **Net Operating Cost** | **$468,300** | **$437,400** | **$467,700** | **$431,500** | **$463,100** | **$426,600** |
| **Cost Per Capita** | $32 | $29 | $30 | $28 | $30 | $27 |
| **Cost Recovery** | 6% | 13% | 11% | 18% | 16% | 23% |

***Notes:***
*Net cost per capita: net operating cost / population*
*Cost recovery: revenue/operating cost*
*The average operating cost was used (between low and high values) and assumed an annual inflation increase of 5% for years 2 & 3.*
*Operating cost does not include costs associated with marketing and communication.*
*Operating costs exclude taxes.*

## PRE-LAUNCH IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following pre-launch activities are proposed identifying key decision points and critical path items as illustrated in this high-level schedule. The figure below illustrates several of these critical pre-launch activities over the next year and a half that will enable the Town to launch the initial three-year pilot in 2027. However, it should be noted that the commuter service launch would depend on the opening of Moodie Station which is anticipated to open in 2027.

Figure ES-2: Proposed Pre-Launch Schedule

| Activities | Q4 2025 | Q1 2026 | Q2 2026 | Q3 2026 | Q4 2026 | 2027 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Council Endorsement | ● | | | | | |
| Fare Agreement with OC Transpo | | ■ | | | | |
| Service Procurement | | ■ | ■ | | | |
| Funding Applications | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Contract Award | | | | ● | | |
| Marketing & Communication | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| Service Launch | | | | | | ● |

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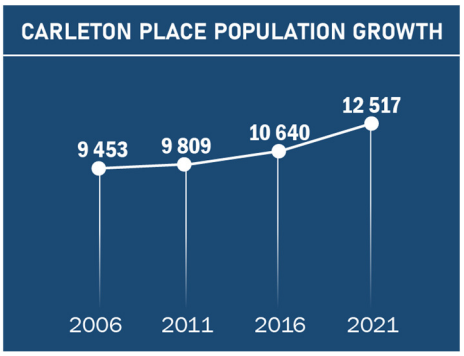
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Carleton Place has prepared a Transit Feasibility Study (TFS) to determine the unmet travel needs of residents and visitors to Carleton Place, and to develop public transportation solutions designed to address those needs. This feasibility study was recommended as part of the Transportation Master Plan (2022) to investigate opportunities to develop, enhance or expand transit service. There is currently no local transit service offered by the Town, however, Lanark County provides transportation services through *Ride the LT* to residents of Carleton Place once a week.




The Town is experiencing significant population and employment growth. Over 15 years, the Town's population has increased by nearly 32% and is projected to grow to 21,500 in the next 20 years [1]. Almost 40% of the Town's population consists of populations with potential to have greater need for transit (i.e. seniors and young people under 15 years of age [2]). The percentage of the population under the age of 15 years old is 17.9%, while the percentage of the population over the age of 65 is 20.6% which has increased by 2.3% compared to the previous census year. In general, the Town's population has a median age of 41.6, which is lower than Lanark County (median age 48.8) and Ontario (median age 43.2).

In terms of workplace, approximately 40% of all residents work within Carleton Place, but approximately 80% of all residents rely on cars for commuting trips [2]. The cost of vehicle ownership is increasing, resulting in a greater desire for more affordable and equitable travel choices. Technology has advanced, enabling innovative solutions that make public transport more feasible for small urban and rural municipalities.

The scope of the study included the following:

- Consider transit needs and opportunities between neighbouring communities and regional destinations.
- Adopt a two-phased public and stakeholder engagement process to understand the Town's diverse travel wants and needs.
- Forecast ridership for the recommended transit system.
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- Develop a transit solution that is realistic, achievable, affordable, and in line with community and stakeholder interests.
- Create a comprehensive framework and work program to implement transit over time, including high-level cost estimates for the selected transit system.

## 2.0 STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS & RESULTS

The project team engaged with the public and key stakeholders throughout the process to inform each component of the study – including the existing conditions analysis, the development of the transit vision, and the selection of a preferred transit system alternative. A summary of the engagement process is presented below.

### 2.1 ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

This section outlines the stakeholder engagement and communication plan for the Town of Carleton Place Transit Feasibility Study (TFS). The purpose of this plan is to document how the study team interacted with its key stakeholders throughout the project. The plan details the method of communication, frequency of updates, and engagement level. The attributes for each stakeholder are summarized in Table 1, which include:

[1] Town of Carleton Place Development Charges Background Study, 2024
[2] Statistics Canada Census, 2021

- **Interest**: the primary areas of interest include high-level project goals and overall project and subsequent implementation of the project's outcomes.
- **Engagement level / goal**: the level of engagement, following the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) definitions:
  - **Inform** – provide the stakeholder with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
  - **Consult** – obtain stakeholder feedback on analysis alternatives and/or decisions.
  - **Involve** – work directly with the stakeholder throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
  - **Collaborate** – partner with the stakeholder throughout the entire process including key decisions (e.g., development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution).
  - **Empower (approval)** – obtain stakeholder feedback and provide the stakeholder with balanced and objective information to enable them to provide direction and approve the plan.
- **Communication method**: the primary means of communication are described as e-mail, meetings, presentations, surveys, focus groups, etc.
- **Frequency**: the number of times or when each stakeholder will be engaged during the planning process.

**Table 1: Engagement and Communication Strategy for Stakeholder Groups**

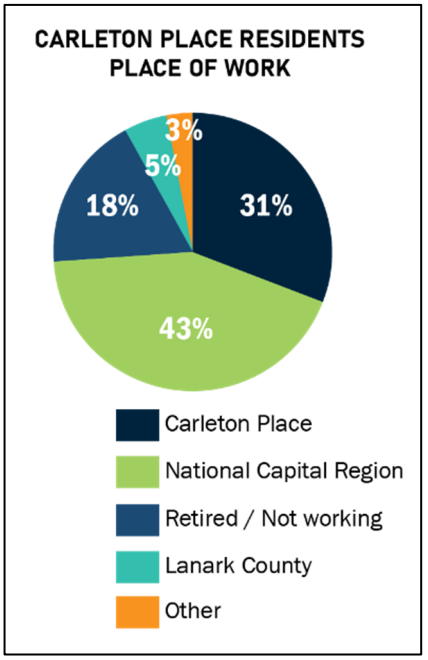
| Stakeholder | Interest | Engagement Level | Communication Method | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Town's Project Manager | Project goals and outcomes | Collaborate / Empower | Meetings / email | Ongoing, biweekly and as required meetings |
| Carleton Place Council | Project goals and alignment with other policy documents | Inform, Consult & Involve | Email / presentations | Two council meetings (interim and final) |
| Key Markets/Local Organizations | Transit service tailored for the groups they represent | Inform, Consult & Involve | Meetings / email | Stakeholder meeting, public engagement, and as needed |
| Regional Service and Infrastructure Agencies | Regional services and infrastructure | Inform, Consult & Involve | Meetings / email | Stakeholder meeting and public engagement |
| Adjacent Municipalities (Lanark, Beckwith, Smith Falls, Perth, Mississippi Mils) | Regional services and infrastructure | Inform, Consult & Involve | Meetings / email | Stakeholder meeting and public engagement |
| Indigenous Groups (Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation) | Information | Inform | Email | Occasional |
| General Public | Project goals and impacts | Inform, Consult, Involve & Collaborate | Engagement sessions (survey and in-person events) | Two phases, February and June 2025 |

## 2.2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### 2.2.1 ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

The first public point of contact was an online travel survey conducted in February 2025. The objective of the survey was to gain a better understanding of travel patterns and markets, popular destinations, and existing mobility gaps, barriers and general issues among Town residents. The survey results provide a deeper understanding of existing mobility opportunities, challenges, barriers, gaps and wishes, as well as transportation and transit-specific priorities for each travel market. The online survey was anonymous and open for two weeks and had over 860 responses. Key findings and common themes from the online survey are described below. Appendix A provides detailed survey results.

- Over 92% of the respondents indicated that they live in Carleton Place with approximately 43% of respondents working in the National Capital Region (NCR) and 31% in Carleton Place.
- Half of the respondents indicated that they have taken some form of transit in the past year:
  - Approximately 80% used some form of private service such as uber/taxi, etc.
  - Approximately 70% used OC Transpo.
  - Approximately 40% used carpooling and *Ride the LT* (*Ride the LT* is a non-profit organization that provides transportation services to residents living in Lanark County and Town of Smiths Falls that connects people with shopping and services, see Section 4.3.2 for details).
- The other half who did not take transit indicated that the **lack of available transit service** is the primary reason respondents do not take transit.
- Respondents indicated that **regional transit connections to Ottawa** are just as important (if not more) than the connections within Carleton Place and other municipalities.
- There was greater preference for a **fixed route system** solution compared to on-demand; however, this may be a result of people's lack of awareness of an on-demand system. The on-demand transit system is more recent and less common form of transit.




The online survey also asked the respondents an open-ended question to provide their general thoughts and concerns on developing a transit system for Carleton Place. Below are the general common themes and concerns:

- Respondents wanted **equitable, safe and accessible** transit options specifically for the elderly, family and youth population.
- Respondents wanted a service that provided an alternative means to access **amenities, adjacent municipalities and employment areas**. This includes the Ottawa region, healthcare, education, recreation and leisure hubs.
- Respondents indicated the importance of providing **affordable** travel options in Carleton Place. However, concerns were raised about the implication of introducing a new transit service, specifically the **potential tax increases and how it would be funded**.
- Respondents expressed the importance of any new transit service operating during **weekday peak hours** and **on weekends**.
- Respondents expressed the importance of connecting any new transit service to other **modes of transportation** (park and rides, and walking and cycling facilities).

### 2.2.2 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE (IN-PERSON)

The second public point of contact was an in-person event held on June 11, 2025. The objectives of the public engagement were to present the problem, seek input on the draft future transit network options, and receive direction on immediate transit priorities. A public open house was hosted at the Carleton Place Arena on June 11, 2025. Fourteen poster boards were prepared with information on the study including a description of the three transit options being considered:

1. Express Commuter Transit;
2. Local Fixed Route Transit; and
3. Local On-Demand Transit.

Participants were invited to share their visions for a transit system, as well as evaluate and provide feedback on the presented options. There were 16 attendees. The boards had been made available on Facebook and CP Scoop to allow other residents to review and provide comments. Materials from the event are available in Appendix B. Key information is summarized below:

- The City of Ottawa was the most popular destination; other locations noted included the Highway 7 Commercial Area, Bridge Street (downtown) and other communities in Lanark County.
- The most popular transit service option was **Express Commuter Transit**, with over 50% of attendees choosing this option. The was followed by **Local On-Demand Transit** then **Local Fixed Route Transit**.
- General feedback related to **Express Commuter Transit** include:
  - A connection to the Ottawa LRT is preferred.
  - Park-and-ride spots in Carleton Place could support this option.
  - There is some interest in evening service to reach events in Ottawa.
  - Preferred rates varied, ranging from $5.00 to $15.00.
- General feedback related to **Local On-Demand Transit** include:
  - Half of participants were unfamiliar with on-demand transit.
  - All participants indicated this would be a good starting point to decide on fixed routes.
  - Participants would generally pay $3.00 to $5.00 per ride.
- General feedback related to **Local Fixed Route Transit** include:
  - Over half of participants would like to see more stops in residential neighbourhoods. Other requested stops were Riverside Park and neighbourhood schools.
  - Participants indicated they would be willing to walk a range of two to seven blocks to a bus stop.
  - 60% of participants would use the bus on the weekday mornings/afternoons, while the other 40% would use it during weekends and evenings.
  - 30 minutes was generally the most amount of time participants would wait for the bus.
  - Participants would generally pay $3.00 to $5.00 per ride.

## 2.3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### 2.3.1 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

A Stakeholder Working Group was created that included various representatives from different groups or agencies that were expected to have an interest or have valuable input on the direction and overall vision of public transit in the Town of Carleton Place. This group was formed in collaboration with Town staff, and the meeting was held virtually on March 18, 2025.

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the TFS and provide an opportunity for attendees to share thoughts, comments, and concerns related to transit service in Carleton Place. Specifically, the project team focused the conversation on mobility

opportunities, challenges, barriers, gaps and wishes, as well as each stakeholder's transportation and transit-specific priorities. The following stakeholders were invited to the meeting:

- Key Groups/ Local Organizations: Town of Carleton Place Mayor, Town of Carleton Place CAO and Recreation & Culture Manager, Carleton Place BIA, Carebridge, Chamber of Commerce, UCDSB School Board, CDSBEO School Board, and Carleton Place Hospital.
- Regional Service and Infrastructure Agencies: OC Transpo & the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO).
- Adjacent Municipalities: Lanark County, Lanark Transportation Authority, Township of Beckwith, Municipality of Mississippi Mills, Town of Smiths Falls, Town of Perth.

The following points summarize the feedback from the meeting and are categorized as follows:

#### ISSUES WITH THE CURRENT SYSTEM

Stakeholders noted that the current available transit options were convoluted and confusing. Shared transportation is offered by multiple public and private organizations with different booking procedures and systems. There is no centralized place to find information about shared transportation options which can be discouraging to prospective users who are unfamiliar with the system.

*Ride the LT*, the existing on-demand transit service operated by Lanark County, requires access to a phone or the internet to book rides. For low-income folks and members of the community that do not have access to a cellphone/Wi-Fi, booking must be made through social services which are limited given the hours of social services operation (e.g. clients that work nights are not able to book a ride after 4pm when Lanark County Social Services closes).

#### CONCERNS AND POTENTIAL ROADBLOCKS TO IMPLEMENTATION

A notable concern amongst local stakeholders was the risk of increasing taxes to fund a new public transit system, and the potential negative reaction from residents. More expensive systems (like fixed route transit) may have greater public support, but the costs will have to be carefully considered. A new system must be financially feasible, with realistic long-range budgets that leverage funding opportunities.

From the perspective of the Business Improvement Association, parking is a common concern amongst Carleton Place business owners, particularly in Downtown. The transit recommendations resulting from this study should consider business access and be designed to address parking concerns/complaints.

#### TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN SYSTEM TYPES

In general, stakeholders agree that an on-demand transit system is the preferrable option in the short term, as it gives flexibility and opportunities to explore fixed route transit in the future without a large up-front financial investment. For example, there was discussion about hybrid transit systems – fixed route transit and on-demand transit to serve different days or times of day. A hybrid option could address different travel markets' needs.

### 2.3.2 TOWN COUNCIL

An in-person Town Council Meeting was held on May 20, 2025, prior to the second public engagement phase in late Spring. The purpose of this interim meeting was to update the Council on the study progress and solicit feedback on the problem definition, transit objectives and priorities, and the draft transit network options. In general, there was a consensus that transit service is needed given the growing senior population and young families keeping in mind that affordable travel options must be provided. There were notable concerns about the financial implications of a new transit system, and a desire for more affordable turnkey solutions, such as outsourcing the service rather than a Carleton Place operated service.

# 3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

Across Canada, transit has become an integral part of the transportation landscape; whether people reside in large municipalities or small, there is a growing focus on enhancing or expanding transit services to address affordability, environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation, thereby improving overall quality of life. Carleton Place is no different; the recently completed Strategic Plan (2023), Transportation Master Plan (2022), and Official Plan Amendments (last consolidated in 2021) highlight the Town's shift towards a more sustainable vision of its transportation system. Some of the key transit priorities established in these policy documents are summarized below.

## 3.1 TOWN OF CARLETON PLACE STRATEGIC PLAN (2023-2026)


One of the five priorities defined in the Strategic Plan is "Transit System & Options", which aims to "better move people and goods in Town and beyond in a sustainable way". The immediate short term (1-2 years) objective is to undertake a transit study to identify options for intra (in town) and inter (between communities) transit connections. Other long-term objectives include:

- determining any areas of transit inter-municipal cooperation/ efficiency;
- developing transit pilot service (local and commuter) by the end of term (2026); and
- identifying improvement areas for non-vehicular traffic.

## 3.2 TOWN OF CARLETON PLACE OFFICIAL PLAN (2021)

The Town of Carleton Place Official Plan (OP) provides a policy framework that guides the land use decisions within the Town over the next 20 years. Development and growth in the Town must proceed in a manner which is in full conformity with the policies of the Town's OP.


The objectives and policies defined in the OP relating to transit infrastructure are as follows:

- Section 3.3.3 indicates that *"The Town will consider opportunities for the acquisition of lands within the Highway District for a future Park and Ride facility to facilitate inter-city public transit options."*
- Section 4.3.1 indicates that *"public service facilities should be co-located in community hubs, where appropriate, to promote cost-effectiveness and facilitate service integration, access to transit and active transportation."*
- Section 6.13.9 indicates that *"convey part of the land to the municipality to the satisfaction of and at no expense to the municipality for a public transit right of way."*

## 3.3 TOWN OF CARLETON PLACE TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN (2022)

In 2022, Parsons completed the Transportation Master Plan for the Town of Carleton Place to guide a proactive approach to planning a multi-modal transportation system that will serve the community through to the year 2041 and beyond. The TMP was guided by the following vision:


> *"The Town of Carleton Place will strive to create an inclusive and barrier-free multi-modal transportation system. The transportation system will move people and goods safely, sustainably, and efficiently while maintaining the values of a growing, vibrant, heritage-rich and healthy community."*

Four transportation strategies were evaluated against criteria based on the established TMP objectives. Based on the evaluation, the sustainable strategy strikes a balance, addressing localized congestion and road network inefficiencies, while investing in infrastructure and policies that support walking, cycling, transit, and mobility services to improve system performance by reallocating demand from personal

vehicles to more sustainable modes. The TMP recommended a gradual approach to addressing the needs and challenges of transit in the Town. The recommendations also included:

- Coordinate with OC Transpo, the County of Lanark, and private transit operators to target commuter travel to the City of Ottawa.
- Engage the County of Lanark and the Lanark Transportation Association to explore expansion of existing services such as *Ride the LT* and explore the feasibility of demand-responsive transit opportunities.
- Improve access to transit by prioritizing pedestrian facilities to transit, ensure AODA compliance and ensure links are prioritized for winter maintenance.
- Prepare a Transit Feasibility Study at the appropriate time, to advance the discussion and inform how a local transit service may be provided in the Town that will be sustainable in the fullness of time.

Furthermore, the TMP focuses on creating a more sustainable transportation system by providing supporting infrastructure and policies to encourage sustainable mode of travel:

- Commitment to implement and strengthen the active transportation network;
- Explore opportunities to encourage transit or rideshare to reduce reliance on private vehicles; and
- Encourage more mixed-use developments and higher density.

## 4.0 REVIEW OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRENDS

Prior to developing transit system options to suit the needs of the Town, it is critical to establish the existing conditions of the physical area: its population, transportation services, zoning and land use. The findings from the existing conditions analysis are summarized in this section.

### 4.1 POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT

#### 4.1.1 POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

The Town of Carleton Place has been one of the fastest growing municipalities within Lanark County over the last 15 years. Between 2006 and 2021, the population increased by approximately 32%, resulting in a 2021 population of 12,517 residents (Census 2021). The 2024 Development Charges Background Study estimates the population of the Town of Carleton Place at 13,871 residents and is anticipated to continue growing at an annual rate of 2.5%, reaching a population of approximately 21,500 in the next 20 years.

**What does this mean for transit?**

*Population and employment growth must be supported by sustainable transportation options. Public transit provides an equitable and affordable means for people to access their place of employment, appointments and activities. Understanding population and employment density are critical for selecting and designing a viable public transit system.*

The Town currently has approximately 5,900 total households, including single and semi-detached units, multiple dwellings, and apartments, with an average of 2.35 persons per household [3]. Approximately 60% of dwellings are single or semi-detached units, while other multiple and apartment units represent approximately 40%. The Town of Carleton Place has a total population density of 1,259 people per square kilometer. The density is relatively evenly distributed throughout the residential districts of the town, while newer subdivisions create denser areas on the periphery of the Highway and Mississippi districts.

The Development Charges Background Study forecasts a total of 9,138 residential units in the next 20 years, resulting in an average of 160 units constructed per year. Median to high density housing units (multiple and apartment units) are anticipated to increase to approximately 60% of all units, whereas low density housing units are expected to decrease to 40%. This indicates the Town's evolution to a higher density community with the potential to suit and support sustainable transportation options.

[3] Development Charges Background Study, Town of Carleton Place 2024, Page 3-4

Table 2: Population and Housing Growth

| Population Growth | Housing Growth | Housing Units |
|---|---|---|
| Population anticipated to reach ~ 21,500 in the next 20 years, at annual growth of 2.5% | Over 3,200 new houses in the next 20 years, average ~160 per year | ~42% low density<br>~ 22% medium density<br>~ 36% high density |

According to the Census, the working population in the Town including work at home is 4,370 persons in 2016[4] with an additional 570 employees identified by the Town as having no fixed place of work. The Development Charges Background Study expects total employment in the Town to reach approximately 7,150 by 2034 and 8,010 by 2044. This represents an employment increase of 1,240 for the 10-year forecast period and over 2,000 for the 20-year forecast period. Excluding working from home and no fixed place of work, an employment increase of 820 and 1,270 in the next 10- and 20-year forecast horizon year is anticipated, respectively.

Table 3: Total Job Growth and by Sector

| Job Growth | Institutional Growth | Commercial Growth | Industrial Growth |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1,270 jobs anticipated to be created in the next 20 years | 174,000 $ft^2$ over the next 20 years | 287,000 $ft^2$ over the next 20 years | 315,000 $ft^2$ over the next 20 years |

### 4.1.2 ZONING, LAND USE, AND DEVELOPMENT

Figure 1 below shows land-use designations in the Town of Carleton Place from the Town's Official Plan (OP). The OCP defines five key districts with specific policy direction for land use – the **Mississippi District**, **Employment District**, **Highway District**, **Downtown District**, and **Residential District**. The Residential District lands are the primary housing locations in Carleton Place, including both existing residential areas and greenfield sites annexed for future residential development and growth. The Downtown District permits ground-floor pedestrian-oriented commercial land uses aiming to cultivate a unique mix of businesses and services. The Mississippi, Employment, and Highway districts are large areas inclusive of smaller, subdivided land uses.

In addition to the districts, the Town of Carleton Place has four *Strategic Properties* defined as smaller parcels targeted for growth, including medium- (22-35 units/ha) and high-density (>35 units/ha) mixed-use developments. The intent of developing these properties is to strengthen and diversify Carleton Place's housing stock, create more middle housing, and complement the Town's existing land uses and community hubs with higher density community-oriented spaces. The four *Strategic Properties* are shown in Figure 1 and defined as follows:

- McArthur Island (150 Mill Street).
- Former site of the Findlay Foundry (28 High Street).
- Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers property (142 Franktown Road).
- DRS manufacturing plant property (115 Emily Street).

Residential density increases are not limited to the Strategic Properties. The Town has numerous subdivision projects in the development application process:

- The most recent residential community approved in Carleton Place is the Uniform's McNeely Landing.
- Other subdivisions include Jackson Ridge, Miller's Crossing (SE of roundabout on McNeely Ave), Carmichael Farm, Carleton Landing North, NuGlobe/Coleman Central, McNeely Landing and 166 Boyd Street.

According to the 2023 Annual Activity Report Card for Lanark County, the Town of Carleton Place has 513 available units in registered plans of subdivision yet to be constructed as of the beginning of 2024. An additional 527 units are approved in the draft approved plans of subdivision and 1,280 units are proposed in submitted plans of subdivision

[4] The 2024 Development Charges Background Study does not utilize 2021 Census employment results due to significant increase in work at home employment captured due to Census enumeration occurring during Covid 19 lockdown.

Figure 1: Carleton Place Land Use Designation

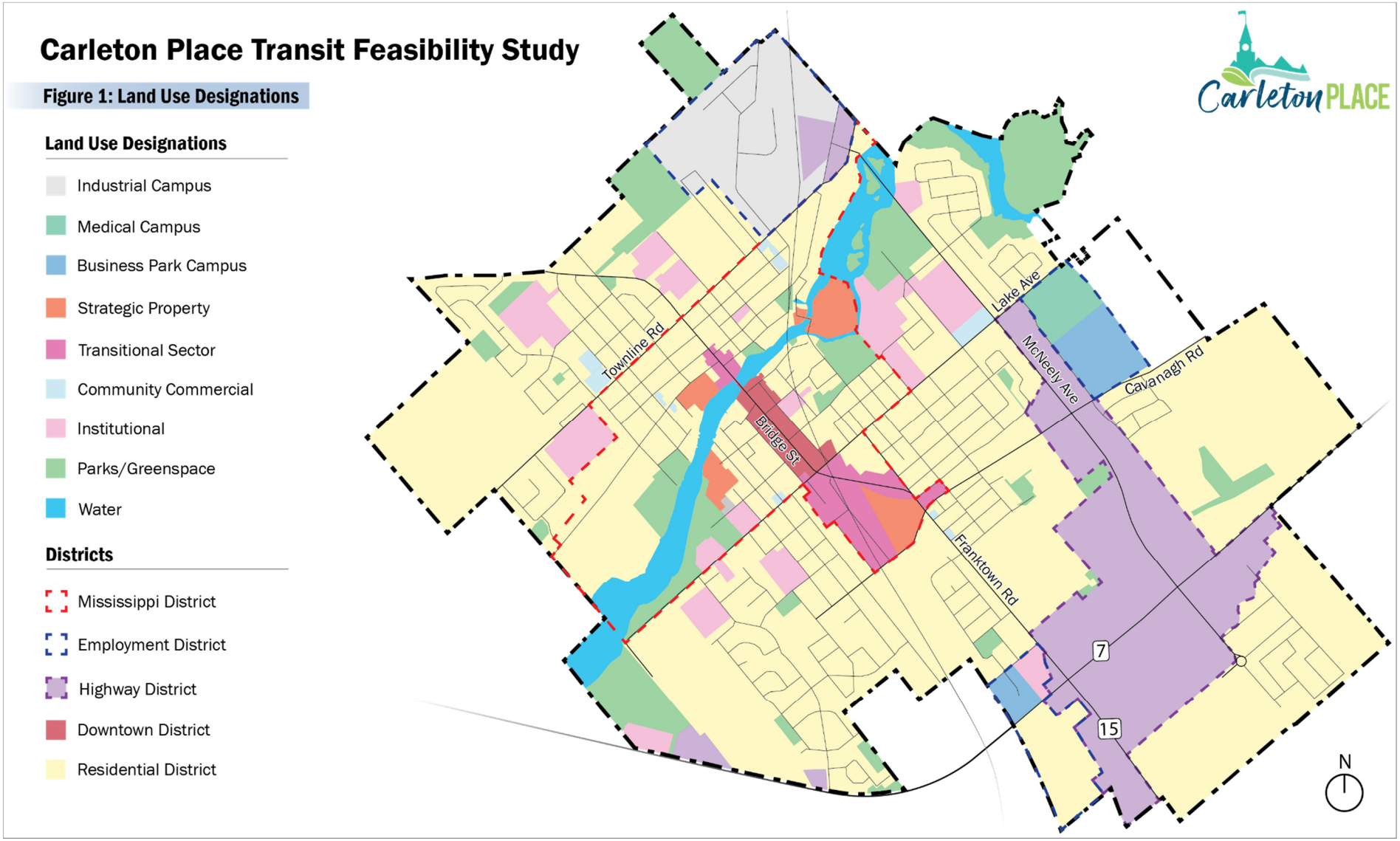
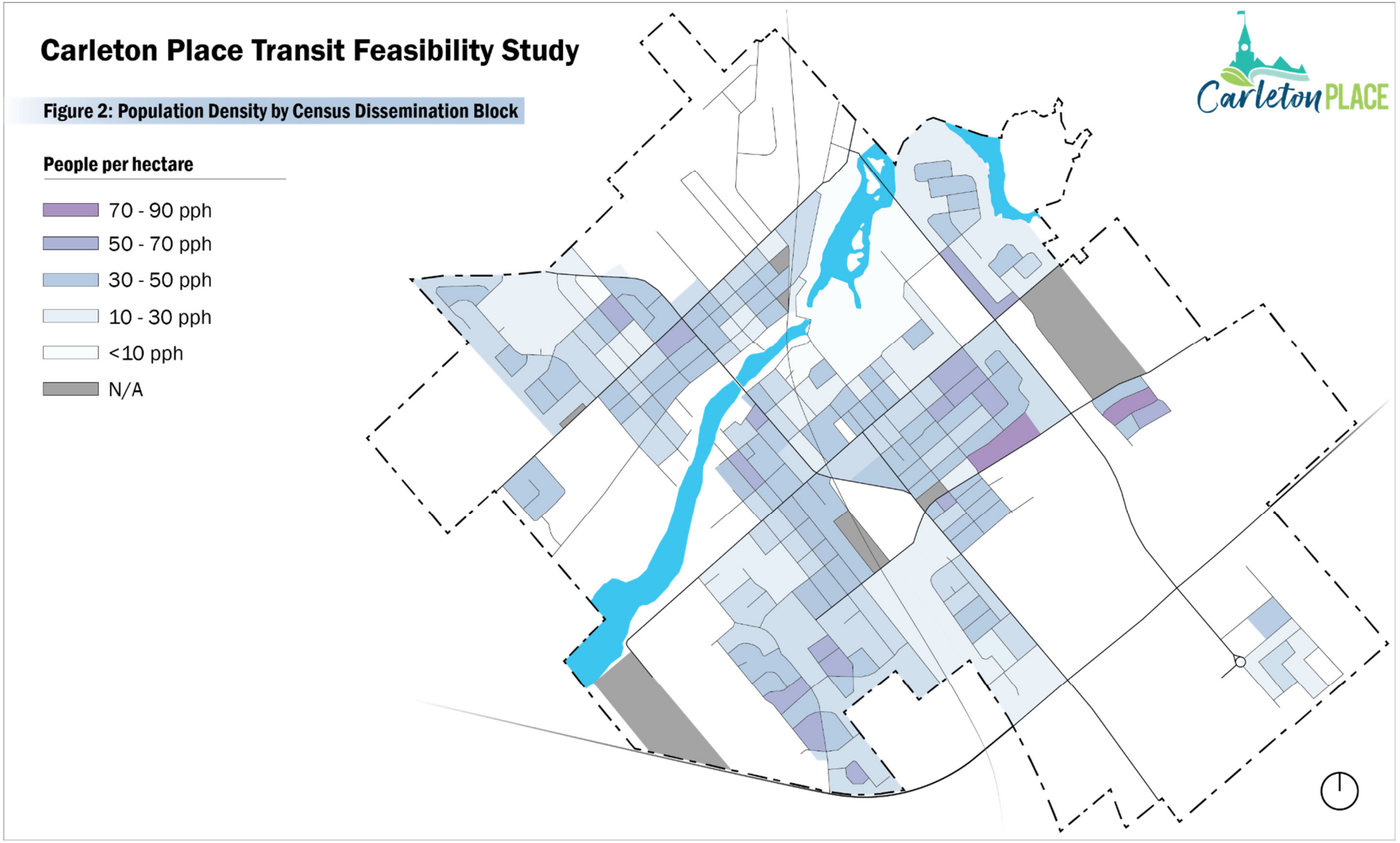


Figure 2: Carleton Place Population Density



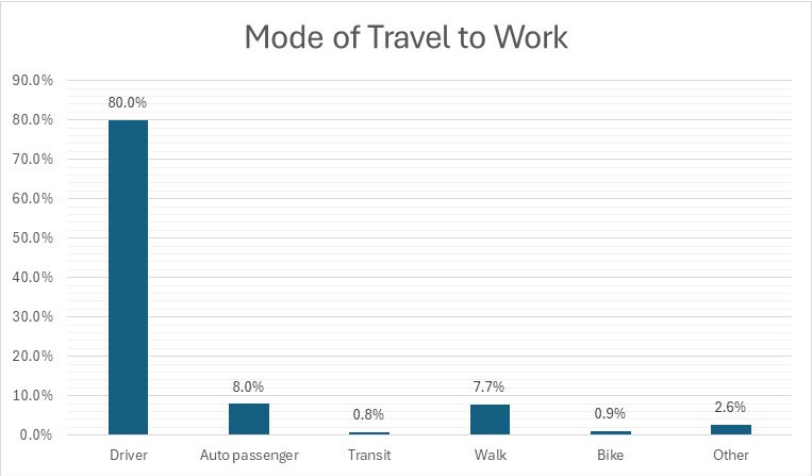
## 4.2 EXISTING TRAVEL MODES AND PATTERNS

The following sections provide details on Carleton Place residents' travel needs and travel routines.

### 4.2.1 TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

According to the 2021 Census, the total employed labour force of Carleton Place consists of approximately 5,970 employees. The employed labour force travelling to a consistent workplace was 3,540 employees with 735 employees with no fixed work location, and 1,690 employees working from home. The increase in the number of employees working from home was captured due to Census enumeration occurring during Covid 19 lockdown.

Approximately 50% of employees travelled to a consistent or no fixed workplace between the hours of 6:00 am and 8:00 am, which coincides with typical weekday commuter peak periods.




Among the 3,540 employees with a consistent work location, approximately 45% (1,585) worked in the City of Ottawa, 42% (1,460) were employed internally within Carleton Place, and 13% (465) travelled externally to another municipality within the County of Lanark.

The main mode of commuting from home to work was by auto-driver (80%), where 35% of workers commute less than 15 minutes, which may indicate the need to provide alternative modes of travel within Carleton Place. It should be noted that although auto-driver mode share remained consistent compared to the previous census year (2016), however, transit mode share was higher in the 2016 Census (approximately 3%) compared to the 2021 Census. The decrease in transit mode share in 2021 is likely due to the impact of Covid 19 lockdown.

### 4.2.2 MAJOR TRIP GENERATORS AND ATTRACTORS

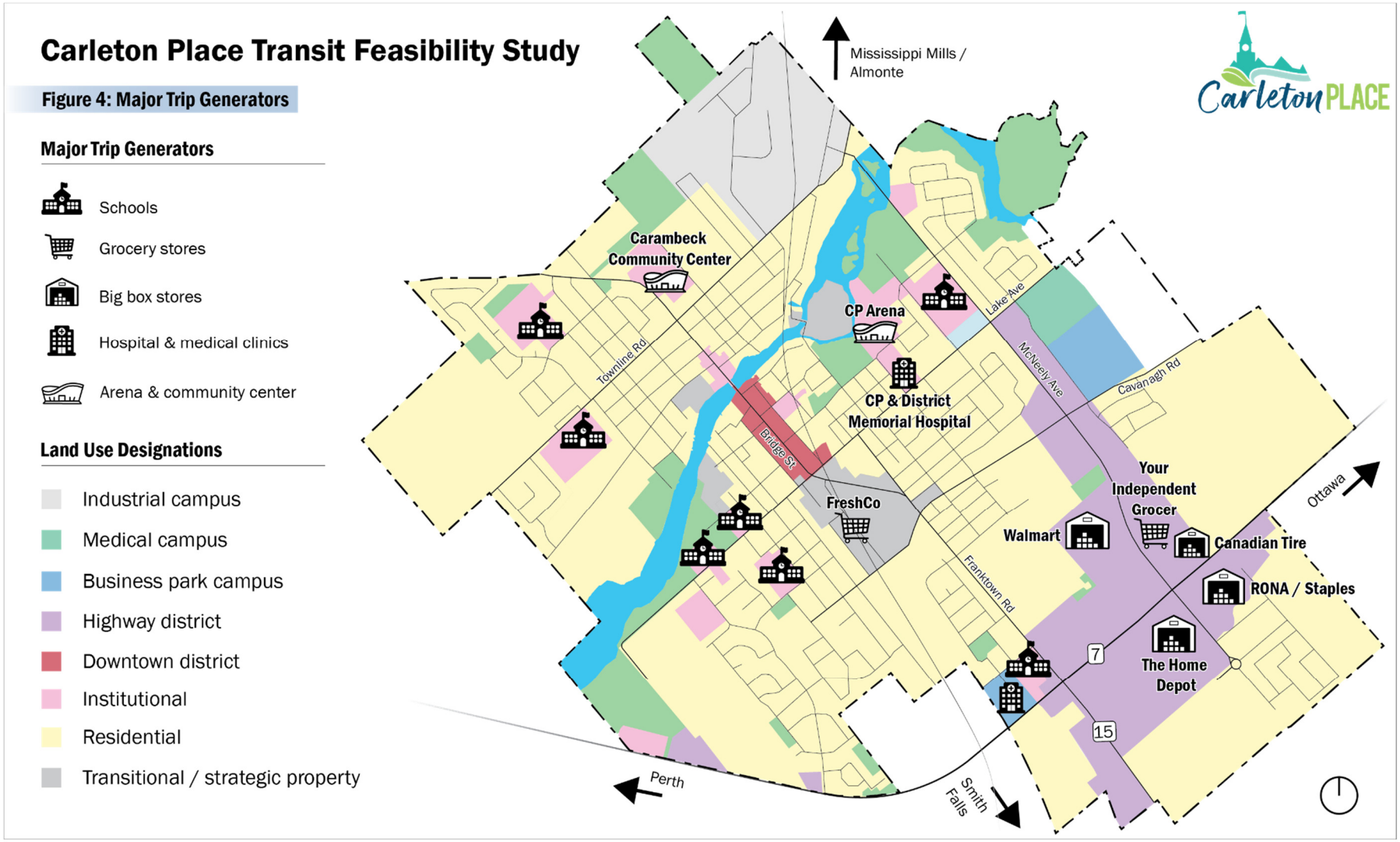
Figure 3 illustrates locations within Carleton Place that are places of interest with potential high demand for travel. These places include major services, institutions, commercial shopping centers, schools, and community centers. Whether for commuting, shopping, recreation, or access to medical services these locations inform the planning of transit routes, as they represent popular trips that residents and visitors to the Town may take.

To understand the travel patterns of visitors to key commercial destinations, Table 4 provides service hours of major commercial big box stores within Carleton Place. Providing local transit service during early morning and evening hours may provide value to people who work at these locations or wish to shop at the commercial stores during these hours.

Table 4: Operation Hours of Key Commercial Stores

| Destination | Hours of Operation | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Monday-Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
| RONA | 7am – 8pm | 7am – 6pm | 8am – 6pm |
| The Home Depot | 6am – 8pm | 8am – 6pm | 8am – 6pm |
| Your Independent Grocer | 8am – 9pm | 8am – 9pm | 8am – 8pm |
| FreshCo | 8am – 9pm | 8am – 8pm | 8am – 8pm |
| Canadian Tire | 8am – 8pm | 8am – 6pm | 9am – 6pm |
| Walmart | 7am – 10pm | 7am – 10pm | 7am – 10pm |

Figure 3: Major Trip Generators and Attractors



## 4.3 TRANSIT SERVICE

### 4.3.1 PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS AT TRANSIT SERVICE

The following points provide the previous transit services in Carleton Place:

- **Lanark Community Transit**: In 2010, the Town ran a pilot project called Lanark Community Transit (LCT), which provided a transit service from Carleton Place to Ottawa. At the time, a private bus company already operated the route, however, LCT believed they could offer a cheaper, more convenient service. LCT completed community outreach and public consultation and secured funding to launch. After three months of operation, the company sold their buses to a private operator, Leduc Bus Lines Ltd.
- **Leduc Bus Lines Ltd:** Since that time, Leduc Bus Lines has been providing transit service between Almonte, Carleton Place, and Perth (Routes 502 and 503). These routes were suspended in March 2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic and have yet to be reintroduced. Route 538 also previously provided service between Ottawa and Carleton Place but was discontinued due to low ridership. Route 538 also previously provided service between Ottawa and Carleton Place but was discontinued due to low ridership.

### 4.3.2 EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES

The Town does not currently have its own transit service and relies on services provided by other municipalities or private operators. A summary of these services is provided below.

#### RIDE THE LT

Lanark County provides transportation services within the County including Carleton Place for a limited number of days and hours as illustrated in Figure 4 and detailed in Table 5. Lanark Transportation Association (LTA) is a non-profit association that relies on multiple funding sources (such as Gas Tax Revenue) and donations to operate their service within the County. There are three principal routes:

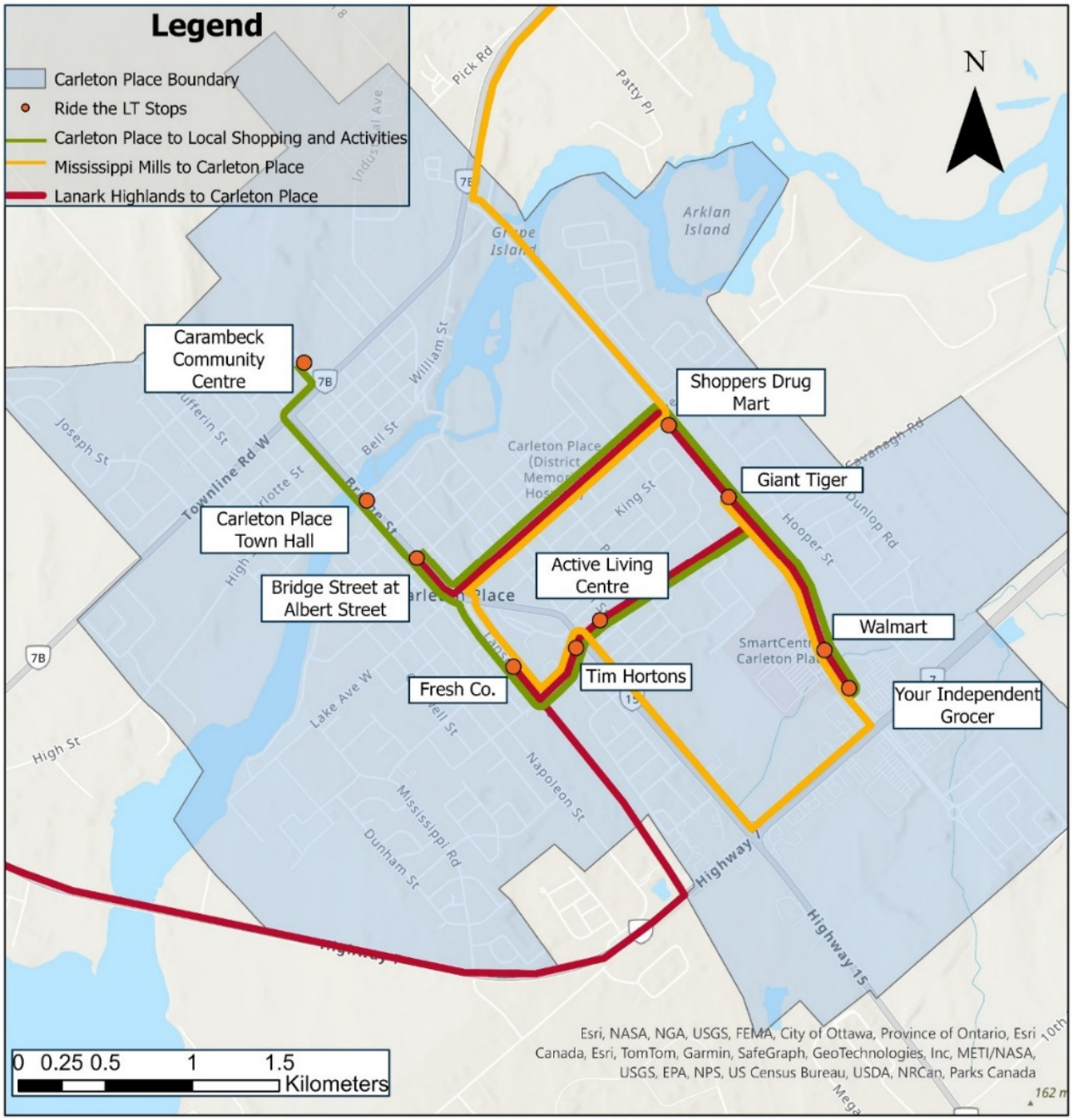
- Within Carleton Place (Green Line): *Ride the LT* provides transit services from Carambeck Community Centre and Town Hall to local shopping areas every Wednesday. The route stops at eight other locations as illustrated in the map below. It also offers personalized pick-up/drop-off for those with mobility issues. Communication with *Ride the LT* has indicated that ridership is low within Carleton Place. This may be related to the limited number of service hours as noted in the table below targeting the limited travel market.
- Lanark Highlands to Carleton Place (Red Line): *Ride the LT* provides transit services from Lanark Highlands to Carleton Place every 1st Tuesday stopping at seven (7) locations.
- Mississippi Mills to Carleton Place (Orange Line): *Ride the LT* provides transit service from Mississippi Mills Public Library (Almonte Branch) to Carleton Place stopping at three locations every 2nd and 4th Thursday.

Table 5: Ride the LT – Service Details

| Service | | From/To | Schedule | Cost | Service Type | Booking |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ride the LT (Lanark Transportation)** | Carleton Place Local Service | Carleton Place / Local shopping and activities | Wednesdays 9:40am – 12:05pm (Requested pick-up/drop-off before & after set hours) | $2.00, round trip | Fixed route shuttle | Registration by phone by Tuesday at 10am |
| | Lanark Highlands to Carleton Place | Lanark Town Hall / Carleton Place | Every first Tuesday of the month | $4.00, round trip | Fixed route shuttle | Registration by phone by Monday at 10am |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mississippi Mills to Carleton Place | Mississippi Public Library, Almonte Branch / Carleton Place | Every second and fourth Thursday of each month | $2.00, round trip | Fixed route shuttle | Registration by phone by Wednesday at 10am |
| | Accessible Transportation and Medical Services | N/A | N/A | Variable | On-demand, medical | N/A |

Figure 4: Ride the LT Service Routes in Carleton Place



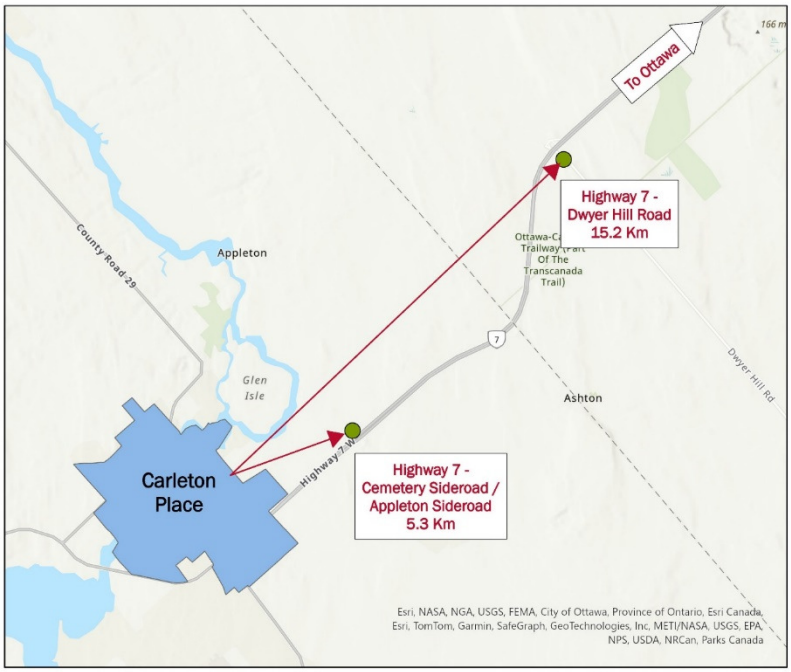
### CAREBRIDGE

Carebridge is a volunteer non-profit agency that supports communities in Lanark County, providing patient and elderly transportation services among other community support services. The service includes in-town and out-of-town service for those with a disability or senior citizens.

### RIDESHARE / CARPOOL

The Town does not have any official ridesharing or carpooling services, but there are informal arrangements that occur organically within the community. The County of Lanark has a "Community Ride Share Connection" Facebook and four park and ride lots. The nearest to the Town is the Appleton Road Park and Ride, which has 30 parking spaces and 4 accessible spaces. It should also be noted that the County of Lanark was part of the Community Carpool Program that was operated by Rural Frontenac Services. The service was cancelled due to lack of demand.

Figure 5: Nearby Park and Rides




### REGIONAL SERVICES

Privately operated regional bus services provide transportation between Carleton Place and popular regional destinations. Rider Express operates daily between Toronto and Ottawa with a stop in Carleton Place. The service runs one trip in each direction per day, costing roughly $20-$30 as of August 2025 for a one-way trip from Carleton Place to Ottawa. FlixBus offers a marginally more affordable service, as cheap as $12 dollars for a trip from Carleton Place to Ottawa.

### TAXI SERVICES

Multiple taxi services are available within Carleton Place that include County Cab, Comfort Taxi and Bud's Taxi, which in general provide the following services:

- Pick up and drop off at and to your destination.
- Airport drop off / pick up.
- Accessible vehicles are available for users with mobility challenges.

**What does this mean for transit?**

*Changing travel perceptions and behaviours in a primarily car-dependent community is a significant challenge. While a ridership base (albeit scattered and not centralized) exists for the few transportation services that are currently operational, there must be strategies in place to grow this base, by providing convenient, centralized, affordable and appealing transit alternatives to personal vehicles.*

*The Covid 19 pandemic decimated ridership, and it presented opportunity to work from home that reduced demand and drove up costs. Despite the challenges, some services like Ride the LT persevered, and now demand for transit is returning to normal. All these show an opportunity to focus on long-term sustainable and resilience transportation solution for Carleton Place.*

## 4.4 PLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

Figure 6 illustrates the street network improvements that were developed as part of the 2022 Transportation Master Plan for Carleton Place. The following major infrastructure changes were recommended and approved as part of the Town's capital projects:

- **Extension of Captain A. Roy Brown Boulevard from McNeely Avenue to Highway 15** to support developments south of Highway 7.
- **Widening McNeely Avenue to accommodate growth.** The widening between Coleman Street to Lake Avenue East is in the approved capital projects while the northern section is in the recommended future implementation plan. The north-south vehicle travel between Highway 7 and Lake Avenue is expected to increase significantly with the projected growth. McNeely Avenue is a designated arterial road and is expected to carry the majority of traffic while parallel streets such as Franktown Road, Napolean Street and Mississippi Road experience less traffic volume. These streets have narrower right-of-ways that are used by residents and are not expected to carry regional traffic demand. Adding a new north-south corridor is unrealistic due to the lack of feasible space and significant environmental and cost implications and due to strict access management on MTO highways, MTO would only support the use of existing intersections/connections. Of note, the screenline analysis undertaken as part of the 2022 TMP identified capacity constrained at the Mississippi River crossings and north-south corridor capacity between Highway 7 and Coleman Street. There are only two viable vehicle crossing points within the Town which include McNeely Avenue and Bridge Street. The Mill Street and Gilles Street bridges are single lane crossings that provide very limited vehicle capacity. Therefore, as a recommended capital project, McNeely Avenue is proposed to be widened from 2-to-4 lanes from Townline Road to Patterson Crescent.
- **New road connection between McNeely Avenue and Franktown Road north of Highway 7** with private access onto Highway 7. This would require further coordination with MTO to investigate the implication on Highway 7 and the adjacent intersections.

**What does this mean for transit?**

*It is critical that the Town explore opportunities to reduce travel demand by private vehicles and support initiatives to provide transit service to help defer some of the street network improvements.*

*Providing transit services within the Town will reduce vehicle kilometers traveled (VKT) and carbon emissions. It will offer an alternative mode of travel not only for employees in Carleton Place but also recreational trips and access to medical services for people with mobility challenges or who lack access to a vehicle.*

Figure 6: Future Street Network (Carleton Place TMP 2022)

## Carleton Place Transportation Master Plan

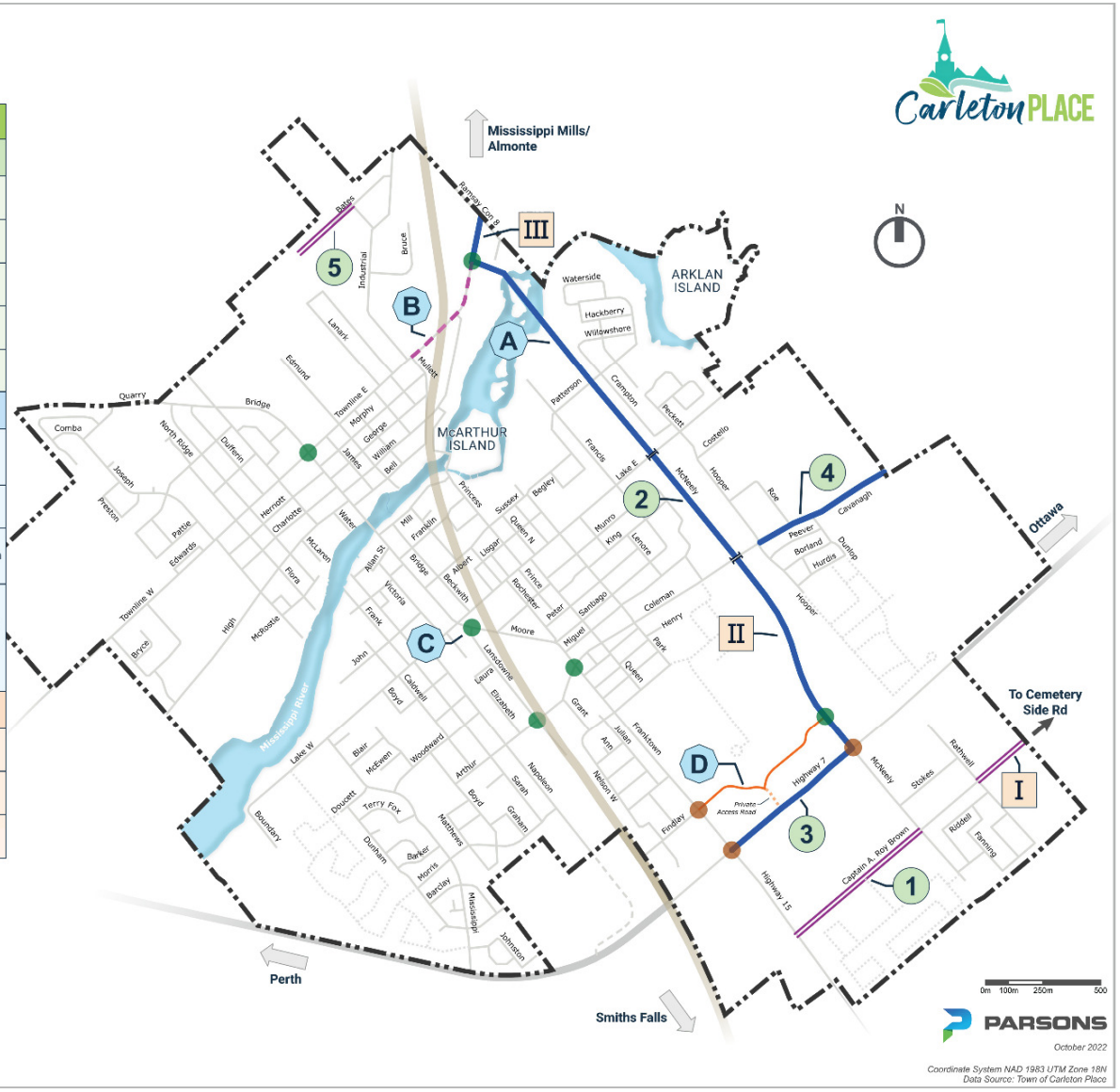
### Map 9: Street Network Strengthening Plan

| | LOCATION | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| **Approved Capital Projects** | | |
| 1 | Capt. A. Roy Brown Blvd Extension | Street extension from McNeely Ave to Highway 15 |
| 2 | McNeely Ave | Street widening from 2 to 4 lanes from Coleman St to Lake Ave. East |
| 3 | Hwy 7, Franktown Rd, & McNeely Ave | Hwy 7 corridor modifications between McNeely and Hwy 15 |
| 4 | Cavanagh Rd | Street widening from 2 to 4 lanes from Hooper St to Boundary Rd |
| 5 | Bates Ave | Street extension to accommodate for future development |
| **Recommended Capital Projects** | | |
| A | McNeely Ave | Street widening from 2 to 4 lanes Lake Ave. East to Townline Rd E with widened bridges across the Mississippi River |
| B | Townline Road E | Lane reduction from 4 to 2 lanes with active transportation facilities from Industrial Ave to West of McNeely Ave |
| C | Moore St | Monitor corridor operations from Lake Ave to OVRT. Consider Right-in Right-out at Lansdowne/Moore intersection if congestion occurs within the corridor in the future |
| D | New Road Connection North of Hwy 7 | The ultimate fate of the future road connection north of Hwy 7 will be decided in the reopened Hwy 7/15 TESR, which is subject to approval by MTO. The TMP recommends a continuous municipal connection between Franktown Rd and McNeely Ave. MUP on both sides if possible, one side at minimum along the alignment of the future north connection road between Franktown Rd and McNeely Ave |
| **Potential Long Term Projects** | | |
| I | Capt. A. Roy Brown Blvd | Road extension from Rathwell to Cemetery Side Rd |
| II | McNeely Ave | Street Widening from 4 to 6 lanes from Hwy 7 to Cavanaugh Rd |
| III | Townline Rd E | Street widening from 2 to 4 lanes from McNeely Ave to Ramsay Con 8 |

**Street Network Enhancements**

- Street Widening
- Street Rebalancing
- New Streets
- Road designations and alignment to be confirmed in the updated Hwy 7/15 TESR by MTO
- Intersection Modification
- Intersection Monitoring
- Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail

*Note: Any project within the MTO permit control area are subject to MTO approval.



## 4.5 BEST PRACTICES REVIEW

The following section and Table 6 summarize our review of transit systems currently operating in other small municipalities across Canada that may inspire the alternative options developed in this study.

Table 6: Summary of Peer Review Transit Services

| Service & Start Date | | From/To | Service Type & Hours | Cost Single Trip | Booking |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **North Grenville Transit (Pop. ~18,000)** | Local On-Demand (January 2024) | Within North Grenville boundaries | On-Demand<br>Mon-Sat: 8am-10pm<br>Sun: 8am-8pm | $5.00 | By phone, app or website |
| | Commuter Service (**NEW** September 2025) | Kemptville/Ottawa Limebank LRT Station | Fixed /Direct<br>2 trips in the morning and 2 trips in the afternoon | $5.00 | |
| **Okotoks Transit (Pop. ~30,000)** | Local On-Demand (December 2019) | Within Okotoks boundaries | On-Demand<br>Mon-Fri: 5:30am-11:30pm<br>Sat-Sun: 6am-11:30pm | $3.50 | By phone, app, website or at select locations |
| | Local Fixed Route (September 2025) | | Fixed Route<br>Mon-Fri: 7am-6pm | | By app or at select locations |
| **City of Pembroke (Pop. ~14,000)** | Local On-Demand (August 2025) | Within Pembroke boundaries | On-Demand<br>Mon-Wed: 7am-8pm<br>Thur-Fri: 7am-10pm<br>Sat: 8am-6pm | $5.00 | By phone, app or website |

### NORTH GRENVILLE, ON

The Municipality of North Grenville, Ontario is located south of Ottawa with a population of approximately 18,000 (Census 2021). The municipality launched its on-demand curb-to-curb transit service (NGTransit) in January 2024. It offers 7-day a week service and booking can be made either by phone, through an app or online. A single fare trip (adult) costs $5.00 with youth single trip at $3.00. The on-demand transit service is a turnkey solution run by a third-party transportation specialist firm called Mobility Transportation Specialists (MTS), which provides all aspects of the service (drivers, customer service, booking software, etc.). The service has been successful where in the first year over 8,000 trips were completed serving 8,500 passengers. In 2025, their ridership reached approximately 13,500 riders. The municipality used their Gas Tax Revenue to fund part of the local on-demand service. Recently the municipality has received additional funding (from Ontario Transit Investment Funding) to support a fixed route service between North Grenville and Ottawa LRT station (Limebank) and expand the existing local on-demand transit service. The new bus (capacity of 16-seat bus with up to three wheelchairs) will be owned by the municipality given the funding covered capital cost. The new bus is anticipated to operate in September 2025.

**What does this mean for transit?**

*The key takeaways from the experiences of other municipalities are highlighted to ensure the Town of Carleton Place transit implementation project sets realistic goals and a simple and easily understandable structure and fare system. A gradual approach to addressing the needs and challenges of transit is recommended. Education and marketing are also critical to ensure the service gains consistent ridership over its operational life cycle.*

### OKOTOKS, AB

Okotoks is a town in Alberta located south of the City of Calgary with a population of approximately 30,000 (Census 2021). The Town launched its local on-demand curb-to-curb transit service in December 2019. It offers 7-day a week service where trips can be booked three weeks in advance with a single fare trip cost of $3.50. The service has been very successful, and ridership doubled in the first two years after meeting performance targets in year one. The on-demand transit service is a hybrid solution which is managed by the Town of Okotoks and operated by a third-party transportation firm and a technology partner that provides the platform for the on-demand service. In September 2025, Okotoks launched a fixed route system to complement the on-demand transit system. In 2024 and 2025, the transit service received funding of $250,000 for each year from various sources and through Town of Okotoks' municipal operating budget.

### CITY OF PEMBROKE, ON

The City of Pembroke is a city in Renfrew County located 145km northwest of Ottawa, ON with a population of approximately 14,000 (2021 Census). The City recently launched their local on-demand transit service (Ottawa River Transit) in August 2025 with a single fare cost of $5.00. The service runs within Pembroke city limits with virtual stops across the City, where customers would be picked up and dropped off at the closet stop to their requested location. The municipality would operate two vehicles plus a single spare vehicle with local service operating during weekdays and Saturdays. Similar to North Grenville, the service will be operated and managed by a third part contractor (MTS). The service is funded by City property taxes, fare revenue and grants from various sources.

# 5.0 FUTURE TRANSIT NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following sections provide details on the transit needs and opportunities to meet the demand within the Town of Carleton Place.

## 5.1 NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES ASSESSMENT

### 5.1.1 LOCAL NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Town of Carleton Place has been one of the fastest growing municipalities within Lanark County over the last 15 years. This growth trend is expected to continue with the population expected to reach approximately 21,500 in the next 20 years. The percentage of population over the age of 65 has increased by 2.3% compared to the previous census year. In response to this anticipated growth, the Town has designated zones for medium to high-density mixed-use developments. The intent of developing and increasing medium-to-high density properties is to strengthen and diversify Carleton Place's housing stock and complement existing land uses and community hubs. This indicates the Town is evolving and there is a potential opportunity to support sustainable transportation options.

Almost 40% of the Town's population consists of residents who tend to have a greater need for transit service (i.e. seniors and young people under 15 years of age). In terms of workplace, it is worthwhile noting that approximately 40% of residents work in Carleton Place with about one-third of commuter travel being less than 15 minutes, which presents another opportunity to reduce reliance on private vehicles and alleviate pressure on key local roads.

Currently, aside from *Ride the LT* (offered by the County) and local taxi services, there is no local transit service offered by the Town. *Ride the LT* has limited operating hours within Carleton Place, which may be the main reason for low ridership using the service. Other services are scattered, and residents might not be familiar with these limited transportation options. This presents an opportunity to provide residents and visitors with a centralized transit service that is competitive, affordable and accessible for all ages, abilities and groups within Carleton Place.

The development of the transit service would need to be gradual and affordable keeping in mind that for small municipalities initial capital and operating costs are barriers, therefore, financial support is required to provide such services. There is success stories observed in other municipalities (such as North Grenville, Town of Okotoks) that have encouraged other municipalities (such as City of Pembroke) to embark on providing sustainable transportation options for their residents through a gradual approach and the support of various funding sources and the municipal budget.

### 5.1.2 REGIONAL NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Carleton Place is approximately 50 km from downtown Ottawa, making it the gateway Town connecting Ottawa to Lanark County. The City of Ottawa is also the largest employment draw for the Town with almost 45% of residents being employed in the City. This was further substantiated in the online survey, where more than 80% of the survey respondents indicated that routes to/from Ottawa are important. With the Federal, Provincial and many municipal governments mandating/encouraging employees to work more often from the office in the coming months, there will be a growing need for daily commuting to Ottawa.

OC Transpo LRT (west extension) will be closer to Carleton Place with the anticipated opening of the Moodie LRT station in 2027. Integrating with the OC Transpo system, at least to the LRT station on the Confederation Line (Moodie Station as part of Stage 2), would be a great opportunity and essential to attract commuters by reducing transfer times and overall travel time.

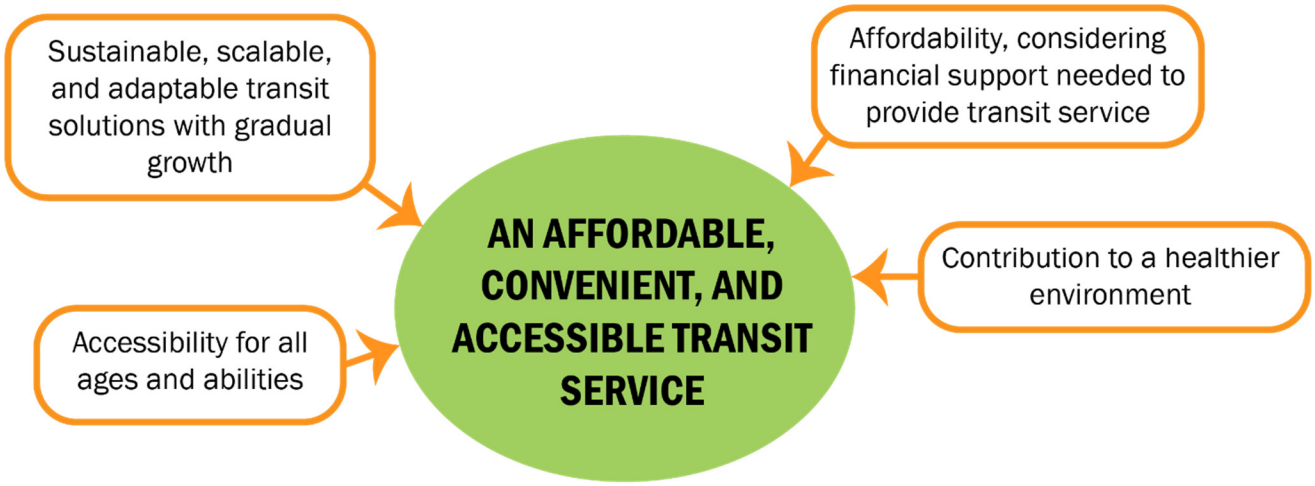
It is understood that commuter services were tried before but failed due to lack of demand (although the lowest demand was experienced during the Covid 19 pandemic). Taxation increases associated with public transportation will be a primary concern to residents of Carleton Place. However, with available funding opportunities that may potentially reduce cost burdens, other municipalities such as North Grenville will launch their commuter service soon (September 2025) to Limebank Station. Therefore, with a more gradual approach and available funding, it is feasible to provide a municipal transit system to address those regional needs.

## 5.2 TRANSIT VISION AND PRIORITIES

The Carleton Place Transit Feasibility Study was guided by the following vision and priorities grafted through consultation with the Town project manager, stakeholders and members of the public. The Carleton Place transit service aims to provide affordable, equitable and accessible transit to users of all ages and abilities that promote high quality life for residents. The transit solution would:

- be **accessible** to people of all ages and abilities; promotes equity in transportation;
- be **sustainable, scalable** and **adaptable** starting small and growing gradually to address the needs and challenges of the Town;
- prioritize **affordability** for both taxpayers and passengers, keeping in mind that financial support would be needed to provide a transit service; and
- reduce GHG emissions and contribute to a **healthier** environment.

Figure 7: Transit Vision and Priorities



## 5.3 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO MEET TRANSIT DEMAND

Based on the review of existing conditions, stakeholder and public engagement, needs and opportunity assessment, three distinct transit services were identified which included:

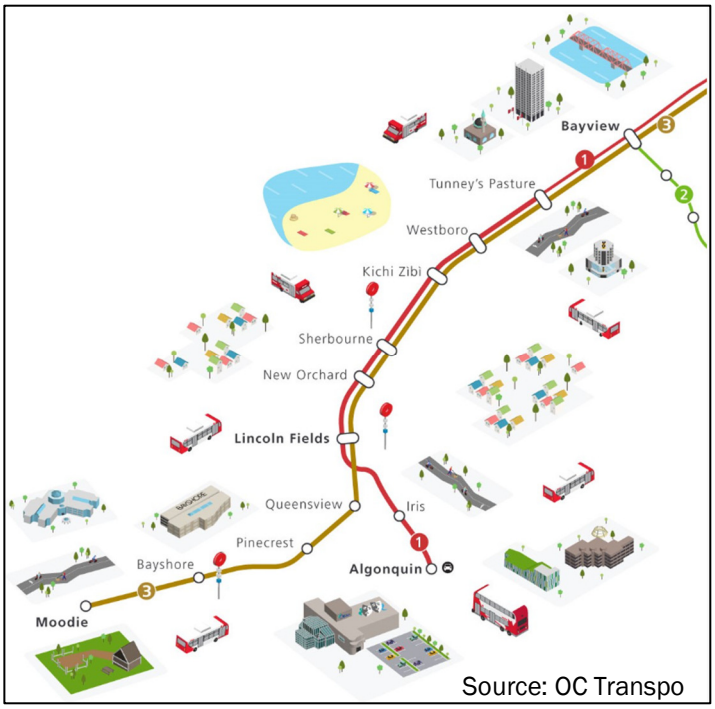
- An express commuter regional transit route connection to Ottawa.
- A local transit system for Carleton Place, either fixed route or on demand.
- Intra-county transit service to larger municipalities such as Mississippi Mills, Perth and Smiths Falls.

The following sections provide description and service characteristics of each option considered.

### 5.3.1 EXPRESS COMMUTER SERVICE TO OTTAWA

Express service routes are a type of transit service with limited stops that typically serve long trips between two points. The route typically would use high speed roads like highways or dedicated lanes to achieve faster travel times over the long distance. In the case of Carleton Place, the express commuter service would provide a connection to Ottawa by way of providing a connection to one of the new LRT stations on Line 3. This transit option would predominately target commuter travel to Ottawa during the peak periods with set schedules and routes.

Ottawa's Light Rail Transit (LRT) Stage 2 is currently under construction with Line 3 (west extension) stations anticipated to be completed in the year 2027. A transit service to Ottawa would offer Carleton Place residents numerous benefits including reduced traffic congestion, specifically in the peak periods of travel demand, improved access to jobs and services and environmental benefits. It would also enhance the quality of life for residents by providing more affordable and convenient transportation options.



Source: OC Transpo

### 5.3.2 LOCAL TRANSIT SERVICE WITHIN CARLETON PLACE

A local transit service would provide an affordable transportation option for everyone within Carleton Place. It would offer connections to a variety of trip origins and destinations within the Town. Two options can be considered for the local transit service: **fixed route** and **on-demand transit service**.

#### FIXED ROUTE TRANSIT SERVICE

A fixed route system is a public transportation system that operates on a predetermined route with fixed stops and schedules (example include: OC Transpo, Toronto Transit Commission, etc.). Fixed route systems make it easier for passengers to plan their journey. However, the fixed route system provides less flexibility and can be inefficient in rural areas where ridership is low, and stops are more sparsely distributed.

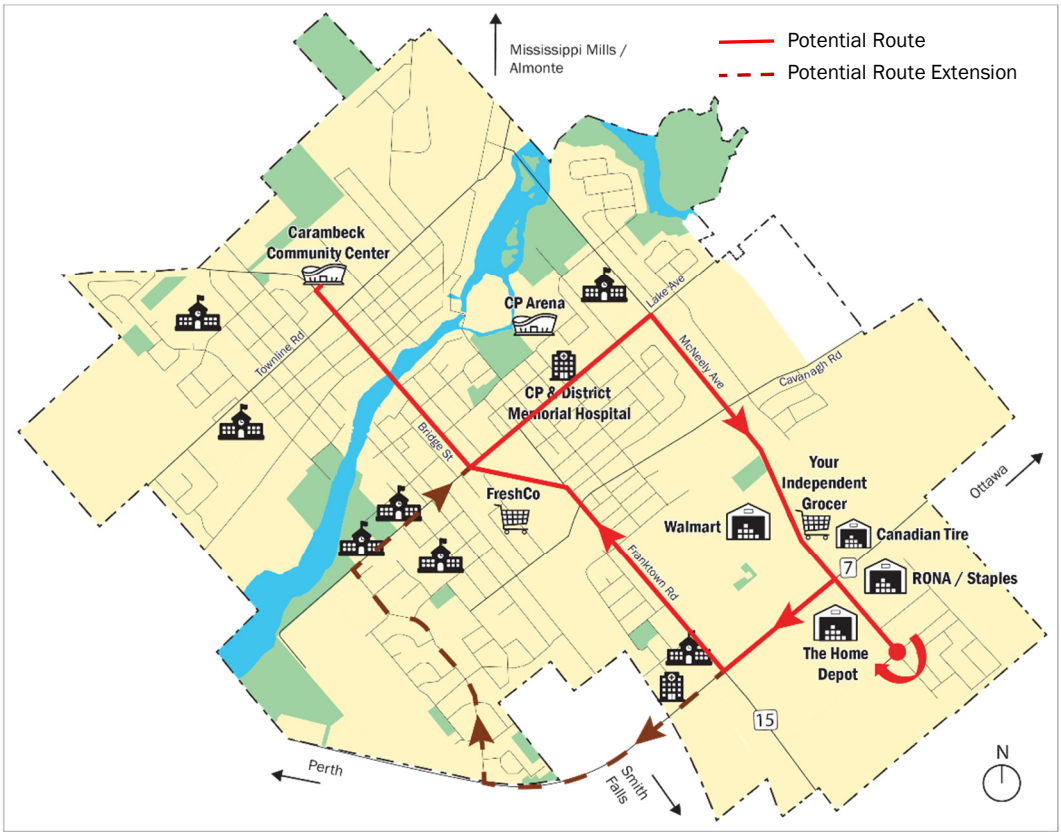
Some of the key service features for a fixed route system are:

- It ideally serves large geographic areas but can also serve medium and small areas with specific attributes.
- Stop distances and service frequencies vary depending on geographic area, ridership and demand. Small municipalities with lower demand often provide less frequent service (i.e., every 30 minutes to every 90 minutes).

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|
| • Consistent and predictable<br>• Easy to understand and navigate<br>• More capacity | • Limited coverage<br>• Lower frequency<br>• Not flexible, fixed schedule<br>• Higher upfront cost relative to on-demand |

Figure 8 shows a potential local fixed route transit option within Carleton Place that would serve many key destinations within the Town. This is similar to the weekly transit service provided by *Ride the LT*. However, *Ride the LT* has limited hours during midday that is focused on targeting shopping / commercial trips.

**Figure 8: Potential Fixed Route Option**




### On-Demand Transit

On-demand transit is another form of public transportation enabled by technology that uses passenger demand to determine routes and schedules. As opposed to a traditional fixed route service, on-demand transit does not have defined routes or stops, instead it uses passenger requests for pick-up and drop-off to determine an ideal route. On-demand transit service is typically applied in areas with lower transit demand, population density, and fewer employment hubs. It can also be tailored to reduce operating costs by utilizing different-sized vehicles such as shuttles, vans, or sedans.

Some key service features for an on-demand system include:

- Trip booking can be made days in advance (typically 30-60 minutes before pick-up).
- Trip booking is done via a mobile app, by phone, or on a website.
- Pick-up and drop-off requests can be made anywhere.

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|
| • Flexibility for scaling<br>• Convenient (door-to-door or curb-to-curb)<br>• Better coverage and connectivity<br>• Efficient use of vehicles, reducing empty buses or underperforming routes<br>• Reduced vehicle emissions<br>• More cost effective compared to fixed route | • No defined schedule<br>• Inefficient for large areas<br>• Requires access to a phone/ internet for booking<br>• Variable wait times<br>• Less capacity compared to fixed route |

This transit option would provide an on-demand curb-to-curb transit service or select stop locations (within 400m walking distance) within the Town of Carleton Place boundaries. There is no formal route map since the service is based on user calls/ requests. It would offer a flexible schedule and route that provides extensive service coverage within the Town. This typically requires phone or online app reservations, a vehicle is then dispatched to pick them up at a designated location and drop them off while also picking up and dropping off additional passengers along the way. Passengers can also book trips in advance, resulting in better waiting times and closer pick-up areas.

#### 5.3.3 INTRA-COUNTY TRANSIT SERVICE

An intra-county solution was also considered as part of this study that could include service for residents of Carleton Place to access larger municipalities such as Mississippi Mills, Perth and Smiths Falls. This option could explore taking advantage of the existing infrastructure (*Ride the LT* program) that currently connects residents of Mississippi Mills and Lanark Highlands to Carleton Place. It would alternatively connect the residents of Carleton Place to the adjacent larger municipalities. However, developing this service would result in significant duplication with the existing *Ride the LT* program that would impede progress and success of both services. Therefore, considerations for this service will be deferred to Lanark County and should be integrated within the ongoing Lanark County Rural Transportation Feasibility Study that is currently underway.

## 6.0 RECOMMENDED TRANSIT SOLUTION

Through responses received through public and stakeholder engagement, discussions with town staff, and review of the alternative transit approaches, it is recommended that the Town of Carleton Place implement a single hybrid transit solution that comprises of two components, a regional express commuter transit route to Ottawa during peak periods that would transition to local on-demand service during off-peak periods.

The transit service would be introduced as a three-year pilot project using a turnkey solution. The contractor would provide a single vehicle (plus one spare vehicle) to accommodate the hybrid solution as outlined below with further details provided in the subsequent sections:

- During **the weekday peak periods**, the vehicle would operate as a commuter service to Ottawa (Monday to Friday) with two outbound trips during morning peak period and two inbound trips during afternoon peak period. The service would start at Carleton Place Arena with direct service to Moodie LRT station.
- During **the off-peak period**, the vehicle would provide local on-demand service within the Carleton Place's boundary limits. The service would run 6 days a week with the following proposed schedule:
  - Monday-Friday: 9:30am to 4pm and 7pm to 10pm; and
  - Saturday: 8am to 10 pm.

### 6.1 CARLETON PLACE TRANSIT SOLUTION

#### 6.1.1 REGIONAL SERVICE TO OTTAWA

A fixed route commuter transit service is recommended that would operate between Carleton Place and the soon-to-be completed City of Ottawa Moodie LRT Station during the peak commuter travel periods. This stop provides direct access to the city-wide LRT system, and connections beyond the LRT network are provided through various OC Transpo bus connections at these stations.

Within Carleton Place, the route would start and end at the Carleton Place Arena [5]. The route would not stop anywhere else within Carleton Place and would continue to the Moodie LRT station. One-way trips would take an estimated 30 to-40 minutes between the Carleton Place Arena and Moodie Station, subject to weather and traffic conditions. Note that there is a dedicated transit lane on Highway 417 that runs between Eagleson Road and Moodie Drive, which could provide some travel time reliability benefits [6]. Customers must register for a trip using either a self-service mobile application, website or by telephone.

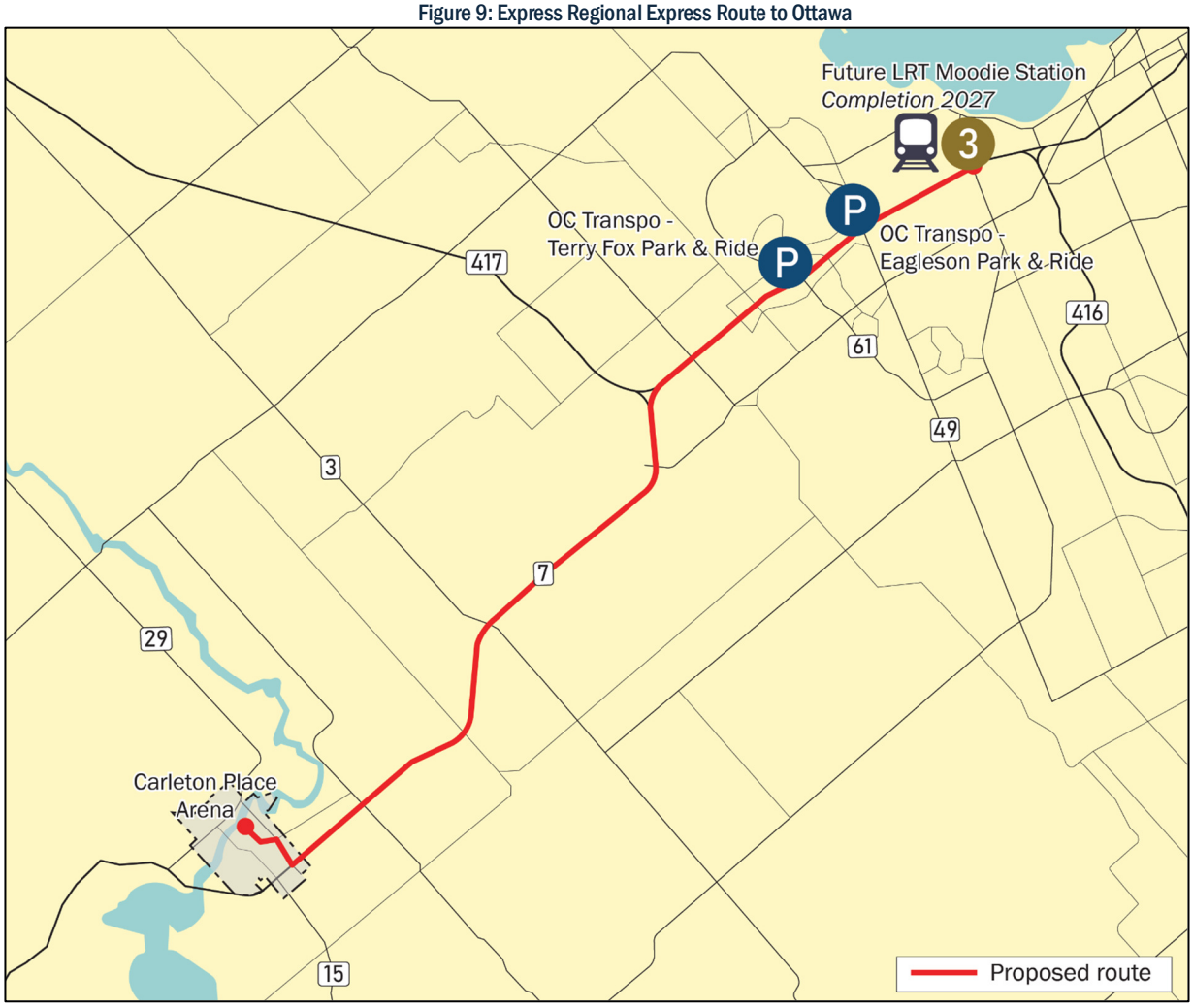
A candidate schedule is outlined below featuring two morning departures from Carleton Place (one early morning and one later morning) and two afternoon departures from Moodie Stations. Exact departures times can be refined once service commences.

Table 7: Candidate Schedule for Carleton Place Regional Express Route to Ottawa (Peak Periods)

| Depart from Carleton Place Arena | Arrive at Moodie LRT Station | Depart Moodie LRT Station | Arrive at Carleton Place Arena |
|---|---|---|---|
| **6:20am** | 7:00am | 7:05am | 7:45am |
| **7:50am** | 8:30am | 8:35am | 9:15am |
| -- | -- | **4:30pm** | 5:10pm |
| 5:15pm | 5:55pm | **6:00pm** | 6:40pm |

*Typical day Travel times are traffic and weather dependent and range between 30min-to-40min. Travel times can be adjusted once service commences.*

Figure 9: Express Regional Express Route to Ottawa




[5] Based on Google image review, there are currently ~190 spaces at the CP Arena. Further review of the utilization of the parking supply throughout the day would be needed to determine if allocation of some spaces to transit users would be appropriate, and how the overall supply during peak times at the CP Arena would be impacted.
[6] It would require further discussions with MTO and OC Transpo.

The rationale not to extend the connection to other stations is to minimize operating costs while providing the residents of Carleton Place connections to LRT stations and major employment areas (downtown) in Ottawa. Additionally, Moodie Station is in close proximity of other employment and commercial hubs like DND complex (~1km from the station), Bayshore Mall (~2km from the station) and Queensway Carleton Hospital (~6km from the station).

### 6.1.2 ON-DEMAND LOCAL TRANSIT SERVICE

The transit service would switch to local on-demand during the off-peak hours (Monday-Friday: 9:30am-4pm, 7pm-10pm & Saturday: 8am-10pm). This service would be provided within the Town of Carleton Place's boundary limits. Customers must request a trip using either a self-service mobile application, website or by telephone. There is no set schedule or bus stops for this service. The on-demand software will schedule their service for pick up and drop off near the requested time.

Refinements and additional details will need to be made with the successful service provider, such as pick-up locations. There are options to consider for pick-up locations such as curb-to-curb where customers would be picked at the end of their driveway or virtual stops where customers would be picked up and dropped off to the closet stop to their requested location (no more than 400m walking distance). However, it is encouraged that the Town prioritize door-to-door service for people with accessibility needs. The vehicle would be equipped with accessible features so residents with accessibility needs can access the vehicle.

## 6.2 SERVICE DELIVERY

The preferred delivery method for the new transit service is a turnkey solution provided by a third-party contractor. The third-party contractor would be responsible for providing operating staff, customer service, booking software and vehicle maintenance. This delivery model would last through the pilot project phase, upon which the Town may continue with this model or adopt an alternative approach. Advantages of a turnkey solution is it reduces upfront costs to the municipality, lowers financial risk, and leverages expertise, assets and experiences from industry professionals that increases the likelihood of success and optimal performance from Day 1.

Once the Town gains experience and understanding of the requirements and procedures associated with the transit service, some responsibilities could shift to the Town when the pilot project phase comes to its conclusion. This may include vehicle ownership and maintenance where the Town can purchase their own vehicle once the pilot project ends. There are several capital funds that the Town can take advantage of, which would minimize capital and operating cost burdens. During the pilot project, the Town should evaluate their current maintenance staff and facilities to confirm providing vehicle maintenance will be feasible and would not require significant investment beyond the current projections for staff and fleet requirements. Table 8 provides a summary of the contractor's responsibilities when delivering the new transit service.

Table 8: Contractor's Responsibility – Turnkey Solution Pilot Project

| Contractor's Responsibility | Description |
|---|---|
| Operations Staff | The Town can retain a transit service contractor who will provide trained drivers, customer service, policy and procedures for the new transit service. The contractor will be the point of contact that Town staff can reach for any concerns or questions. The municipality would not be required to provide additional staff, but it is recommended to assign someone (whether new or an existing staff member) to be the point of contact with the contractor, the public, internal staff and the Council. |
| Vehicle Ownership and Maintenance | The contractor will provide a single primary vehicle with a capacity of 16-to-20 people to serve both commuter during peak periods and local on-demand during off-peak periods.<br>It is also recommended that a backup vehicle be provided to ensure no disruption to service in case of maintenance issues. The Town would not require any vehicle insurance or be responsible for vehicle maintenance. This would provide an advantage to the Town should vehicle requirements change during the contract, where the contractor can readily be available to respond to changes. In terms of vehicle storage, the Town would likely be responsible to store the vehicle. The Town may consider municipal facilities such as the Carleton Place Arena |

| | |
|---|---|
| | or Carambeck Community Centre to house a designated parking space for these vehicles during non-operating hours. |
| **Customer Service and Booking System** | The contractor would provide booking software to support on-demand booking requests for both local and commuter service through various methods that include an online app, website or telephone during all hours of operations.<br>The contractor is expected to provide support to AODA eligible customers and will also be responsible for collecting customer feedback/rating of the service for the Town to monitor customer satisfaction. |
| **Management of Daily Operations** | The contactor would be responsible for managing daily operations of the transit service. This would include supervision, monitoring vehicles in service, a fare collection system (collected, stored securely on board if cash payment is an option), a booking and routing system capable of supporting real-time booking requests and monitoring on-time performance. The contractor would also be responsible for responding to issues in service to support drivers and customers to ensure a quick return to service. |

## 7.0 FINANCIAL FORECASTS

Transit ridership will take several years to mature. Steady growth and adoption require a simple structure and fare system for users to understand, including education and marketing strategies to build awareness and foster loyalty. Particularly in small municipalities where there is long-standing reliance on personal vehicles, it will take time to change, grow awareness and trust in the service. For this reason, many transit agencies conduct significant marketing campaigns and provide incentives when introducing a new service. This section provides details on anticipated ridership and revenue projections and briefly outlines funding opportunities from various potential organizations to support the recommended transit service solution.

### 7.1 FARE STRUCTURE RECOMMENDATION

A well-structured fare system is critical to a successful transit service; it directly affects revenue and ridership, and municipalities must take great care to strike the proper balance between financial return and affordability for the user. A balanced fare structure will be inclusive and equitable for all residents, as well as financially sustainable for the municipality that will ensure it is an enduring service. Table 9 outlines a potential fare structure for the local on-demand service and the regional commuter service:

**Table 9: Proposed Transit Fare Structure by Service**

| | Local On-Demand | Regional Ottawa Commuter Service |
|---|---|---|
| **Single Trip** | $3 | $9 |
| **Monthly Pass** | $55 | $215 |

**Ages 12 and under: Free*

- **Local On-Demand:** The proposed fare structure aligns with industry peers for a local service within the urban core; it would operate on much shorter trips for customers within Carleton Place. The monthly pass is based on the cost factor to the single trip fare, assuming a certain number of monthly trips before an individual breaks even [7].
- **Regional Commuter Service:** The proposed regional commuter service will leverage the soon-to-be completed Stage 2 LRT: Confederation West Line by the City of Ottawa. It is expected to be operational by 2027. OC Transpo has confirmed that the Moodie LRT Station (the westernmost station) bus loop would be a fare-paid zone. This would mean that the Town of Carleton Place would need to enter into a fare agreement with OC Transpo to permit access.

  Initial discussions with OC Transpo suggest there are grounds to establish an agreement; one option is OC Transpo charge Carleton Place boarding and alighting in the fare-paid zone based on riders carried, which is the single adult fare of $4.00

[7] North Grenville currently charges $70 for their monthly pass which translates to a cost factor of 14 trips per month with single trip cost of $5 given it covers much larger area. Similarly, Okotoks currently charges $55 for their monthly pass with a single trip cost of $3.5, which translates to cost factor of approximately 16 trips per month.

(2025 rates) each way. Further discussions between the Town and OC Transpo need to take place to flesh out potential fare strategies and logistics prior to implementation.

For the purposes of this study, assuming a $4.00 surcharge to OC Transpo the proposed fare structure for a single commuter trip was set at $9[8], which includes one-way fare on OC Transpo train or bus at Moodie Station. Should an alternative connection point other than the Moodie Station be selected during implementation, where a fare agreement is not required, the cost of the single trip can be set at a lower value closer to $5. The monthly pass has been set at $215[9], which assumes to include OC Transpo pass [10]. The pass for commuters provides the added benefit of unlimited access to all services (local and commuter) while the local pass / single fare purchase could only be used for local on-demand service. Again, details on the fare agreement and logistics need to be fleshed out with OC Transpo and the third-party contractor prior to implementation.

## 7.2 RIDERSHIP PROJECTIONS

It is important to note that ridership is expected to grow slowly as people become accustomed to and familiar with the new service. Building ridership or changing people's transportation habits takes time to realize their full potential. Therefore, a three-year horizon year was presented in this feasibility study that the municipality can pilot. Major decisions should not be made in the first year but rather focus on making adjustments and improvements to better fit supply with the demand. Also, significant effort should be put into education and marketing the service to ensure residents are aware it exists and how to use it.

### Local On-Demand

The local on-demand annual ridership was estimated based on the anticipated average riders per hour [11] and the service hours of operation. The yearly service hours were determined to be approximately 3,330 hours, based on the following service days and hours: Monday-Friday (9:30am to 4pm, 7pm-10pm) and Saturday (8am to 10pm).

Table 10: Local On-Demand Ridership Projections

| | 2027 | | 2028 | | 2029 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ridership** | **Low** | **High** | **Low** | **High** | **Low** | **High** |
| Riders per hour (average) | 1.0 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 3.0 | 2.9 | 4.0 |
| Annual Ridership Projections* | 3,400 | 6,700 | 6,400 | 10,000 | 9,700 | 13,400 |

**Ridership estimates assume 10% using the service would be age of 12 and under, therefore, riding for free.*

### Commuter

To determine the commuter annual ridership, the number of vehicle trips generated by the Town was estimated based on the total number of dwellings and by applying a standard trip rate during the peak. This is then converted to vehicle commuter trips by multiplying the total by the proportion of trips commuting to Ottawa [12]. The commuter vehicle trips were then converted to transit trips based on potential transit ridership levels expected [13]. Once the peak hour transit trips were determined, they were converted to two-way trips and then to an annual ridership based on number of working days in a year (260 days).

Table 11 provides an estimate of the local on-demand and commuter service with total ridership in each calendar year of operation, starting in the year 2027. The total ridership is expected to start slowly with potentially reaching 22,000 to 31,000 riders by year three.

[8] The cost was set at $9, which assumes Carleton Place would profit $5 and the remaining $4 would be paid back to OC Transpo.
[9] Cost factor of 24 was used which assumes on average 3 trips per week (6 both ways) over a month to align with increased work from the office mandate. Municipal staff are anticipated to return to work 5-days a week next year with federal government mandated to work form the office 3 days a week on average.
[10] Adult OC Transpo Pass is $135 (2025 rate)
[11] Riders per hour estimates were also compared with similar municipalities to ensure assumptions are reasonable.
[12] The proportion of vehicle trips anticipated to go to Ottawa was estimated based on Census 2021 data which indicated approximately 44% commute to work to Ottawa.
[13] Given transit service is new, ridership will take time to mature, therefore, the following assumptions were made for transit mode share capture in the first three years: **Year 1**: 0.5% to 1%; **Year 2**: 0.9% to 1.5% and **Year 3**: 1.4% to 2%.

Table 11: Projected Ridership

| | 2027 | | 2028 | | 2029 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Low | High | Low | High | Low | High |
| **Total Annual Ridership** | **7,900** | **15,600** | **14,400** | **23,300** | **22,100** | **31,100** |
| Local On-Demand | 3,400 | 6,700 | 6,400 | 10,000 | 9,700 | 13,400 |
| Commuter Service | 4,500 | 8,900 | 8,000 | 13,300 | 12,400 | 17,700 |

## 7.3 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

For analysis purposes, the annual revenue for the transit service was estimated based on the single fare ticket purchase, which may provide an optimal revenue estimate. However, should the Town choose to provide incentives such as monthly passes and ticket bundles, the revenue estimates may fluctuate. This may increase the revenue stream by encouraging more riders through these incentives to use the system or result in a lower revenue stream if more users choose to take advantage of these discounts and incentives.

Table 12 depicts the forecasted financial performance for the pilot project. The operating cost for the first three years is based on a review of peer municipalities and speaking with industry vendors. These operating costs are subject to change based on market conditions. Based on the ridership forecast and net operating annual costs, the net cost per capita was determined for each of the years. As the transit service matures, net cost per capita is anticipated to reduce over the course of the three years. Similarly, the cost recovery is anticipated to increase as ridership increases over time. Typically, the cost recovery for small municipalities with similar transit service ranges between 10%-15%, which aligns with industry peers, with steady growth over time. The net operating cost can be further minimized by funding opportunities that the municipality can take advantage of, which may include Gas Tax Revenues [14].

Table 12: Forecasted Financial Performance

| | 2027 | | 2028 | | 2029 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Low | High | Low | High | Low | High |
| Local Annual Revenue | $9,200 | $18,100 | $17,300 | $27,000 | $26,200 | $36,200 |
| Commuter Annual Revenue | $22,500 | $44,500 | $40,000 | $66,500 | $62,000 | $88,500 |
| **Total Annual Revenue** | **$31,700** | **$62,600** | **$57,300** | **$93,500** | **$88,200** | **$124,700** |
| **Operating Cost** | **$500,000** | | **$525,000** | | **$551,300** | |
| **Net Operating Cost** | **$468,300** | **$437,400** | **$467,700** | **$431,500** | **$463,100** | **$426,600** |
| **Cost Per Capita** | $32 | $29 | $30 | $28 | $30 | $27 |
| **Cost Recovery** | 6% | 13% | 11% | 18% | 16% | 23% |

***Notes:***
*Net cost per capita: net operating cost / population*
*Cost recovery: revenue/operating cost*
*The average operating cost was used (between low and high values) and assumed an annual inflation increase of 5% for years 2 & 3.*
*Operating cost does not include costs associated with marketing and communication.*
*Operating costs exclude taxes.*

## 7.4 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The following sections provide a list of known funding opportunities that can be considered by the Town of Carleton Place to help offset some of the costs associated with the transit service. Note that many of the funds cover only capital costs. It is recommended that the Town review these funds early in 2026 to ensure they meet the requirements and deadlines of the applications.

### 7.4.1 GAS TAX FUNDS (GTF)

GTF is a program that municipalities can use to make investments in environmentally sustainable solutions/infrastructure to improve water, air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One of the eligible investment includes providing public transit

[14] It should be noted that North Grenville has received approximately $60,000 through the Gas Tax program in both 2023-24 and 2024-25 allocations.

service to the community. The Town of Carleton Place may use a portion of their Gas Tax Revenue to help offset some of the cost of the transit service.

### 7.4.2 RURAL TRANSIT SOLUTIONS FUNDS (RTFS)

The RTFS is a program created to support development of locally driven transit solutions for remote, rural, indigenous and northern communities [15]. The transit service would help communities conduct day-to-day activities which include but are not limited to commute to work, access to services, medical appointments, social activities, etc. One of the criteria to apply for funds include completing a Transit Feasibility Study (dated after January 1, 2020) where an organization may be eligible to apply for a federal fund. The transit solution eligible for funds can be fixed route, on-demand transit and micromobility services such as e-bikes. However, this fund provides contributions for capital assets like vehicles and infrastructure where in the case of Carleton Place, it would need to own the vehicle to be eligible for this fund.

### 7.4.3 GREEN MUNICIPAL FUND (GMF)

GMF is a program that offers loan and grant funding to support municipalities (small or large) in implementing sustainable solutions that can contribute to reducing emissions and contribute to net-zero GHG emissions. One of the grants that might be of interest to the Town is: **Pilot: Net-Zero Transformation** [16], which may cover a grant for up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of $500K. The purpose of this grant is to help municipalities test a solution that is new to assess its viability and potential impacts and benefits. The other grant is **Capital Projects: Net Zero Transformation** [17]**.** This fund provides loans and grants to deliver sustainable solutions within a community. The grant and loan can cover up to 80% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of $10M. Applications are accepted year-around assuming all the funding has not been allocated yet.

### 7.4.4 ONTARIO TRANSIT INVESTMENT FUND (OTIF)

OTIF helps municipalities start up or expand transit services in unserved or underserved parts of the province, particularly in rural communities. Starting in 2025[18], applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis with the budget for OTIF being $5 million a year where successful applicants can receive funding of up to 50% of project costs for up to five years for projects that encourage sustainable transit services.

This year (2025), the Municipality of North Grenville received up to $719,000 to support a new commuter transit service between North Grenville and Ottawa and the expansion of their current on-demand transit service. The Town of Carleton Place can take advantage of this fund; however, the municipality would need to invest in owning the vehicle as this is one of the eligibility requirements.

[15] https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/rural-trans-rural/capital-proj-dimmobilisations-eng.html
[16] https://greenmunicipalfund.ca/funding/pilot-net-zero-transformation
[17] https://greenmunicipalfund.ca/funding/capital-project-net-zero-transformation#toc-funding-snapshot
[18] https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1005134/ontario-investing-in-transportation-for-rural-communities

# 8.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following sections provide details of the pre- and post-launch activities to provide the best chance for a successful transit service for Carleton Place.

## 8.1 PRE-LAUNCH IMPLEMENTATION

The following pre-launch activities are proposed identifying key decision points and critical path items as illustrated in this high-level schedule.

Figure 10: Proposed Pre-Launch Schedule

| Activities | Q4 2025 | Q1 2026 | Q2 2026 | Q3 2026 | Q4 2026 | 2027 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Council Endorsement | ● | | | | | |
| Fare Agreement with OC Transpo | | ■ | | | | |
| Service Procurement | | ■ | ■ | | | |
| Funding Applications | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Contract Award | | | | ● | | |
| Marketing & Communication | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| Service Launch | | | | | | ● |

The proposed schedule would allow the Town to launch the transit service in 2027; however, it should be noted that the commuter service launch would depend on the opening of the Moodie Station which is anticipated to open in 2027. The following sections provide details on the various activities outlined in Figure 10

### 8.1.1 COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT

The first critical step of the pre-launch of the implementation plan is to obtain Council approval to pilot the recommended transit solution. The Transit Feasibility Report should be forwarded to Council for review and endorsement by the end of this year. Once approved, staff can start the procurement process and funding applications.

### 8.1.2 FARE AGREEMENT WITH OC TRANSPO

Another important step as part of the process is to have discussions with OC Transpo in regard to the fare agreement since the Moodie LRT bus loop is a fare-paid zone. Early discussions with OC Transpo during the feasibility study indicated that OC would charge the Town for boarding and alighting customers based on number of riders multiplied by the single adult fare of $4.00 (2025 rate), each way. OC remains open to further discussion about potential fare strategies with the Town.

### 8.1.3 FUNDING APPLICATIONS

Section 7.4 outlines briefly the funding opportunities that the Town can apply for to support the new transit service. Once endorsement from Council is received, the Town staff should immediately begin their due diligence and if able, start the funding application process. It should be noted that most of the funds will cover capital costs but there are other opportunities that will cover pilot projects such as the Green Municipal Fund (GMF) and the Gas Tax Revenue Fund where the municipality can choose to allocate a portion of the funds to the transit service.

### 8.1.4 SERVICE PROCUREMENT

The procurement process can be launched after Council approval and would involve the following steps:

- Drafting and publishing a request for proposal (RFP);
- Marketing the RFP to potential service providers;
- Evaluating the RFPs;
- Selecting the preferred service provider and obtaining Council endorsement; and

- Entering into an agreement with the successful service provider.

We have provided suggested language to include in the service contract. This list is not exhaustive and may be expanded or refined as needed to encourage strong competitive bids from various proponents:

- This is a turnkey three-year pilot project while also offering opportunity for extension should the three-year pilot succeed (assuming additional funding becomes available).
- The proponents will provide suitable low-floor vehicles equipped with a ramp and/or lift and at least two (2) areas for mobility devices, as well as seats for ambulatory passengers.
- The proponents will provide appropriately trained drivers, including those who are trained to support accessible users.
- The contractor would provide booking software to support on-demand booking requests for both local and commuter service through various methods that include an online app, website or telephone during all hours of operations.
- The proponents will provide same-day trips (on-demand service) to customers who request a trip by a mobile application, web portal or by calling the operator's customer service and booking agent during service hours.
- Require proponents to provide technologies to track vehicle locations (Automatic Vehicle Locations) and a fare collection system (minimum fare box and vault that can secure fares paid if cash payment is an option).
- Ensure that the proponent can track operation and financial performances of the transit service that include on-time performance, average daily riders, boardings, trip status, booking methods, cost effectiveness, etc.
- Ensure that financial incentives are built into the contract particularly for on-time performance and customer service and defining penalties if performance significantly falls short of expectations.
- Require proponents to indicate the service will be delivered using their vehicles for the first three years but also include pricing for municipal owned vehicle should it be required in the future.
- Require proponents to provide hourly rate for revenue service hours and clearly define the annual revenue hours.
- Require proponents to accommodate changes to the transit service's hourly operation (i.e., increase number of days and hours of operation) within the same hourly rate for the duration of the contract.
- Require the proponents to provide a fare collection system that is made as simple as possible to reduce friction between customers and operators. The fare collection should be flexible and provide multiple options either to be purchased using credit card or visa debit on the app, web browser or by phone. Cash fares may also be an option on board the vehicle for customers but to minimize delays to the service, it is recommended that fares include exact cash. Therefore, the proponent should provide a fare box on board their vehicles to collect and secure cash.

### 8.1.5 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Once the procurement process for the new transit service has begun, the Town of Carleton Place should start preparing the marketing and communication strategy to ensure the community is aware of the transit service prior to launch. These activities may include:

- Social and local media outreach;
- Engagement with businesses, schools and community services; and
- Promotional and incentive packages.

The above marketing and communications, may be completed by internal Town staff or a third-party marketing company, can be retained to undertake a more comprehensive marketing strategy. In either case, the Town should consider developing marketing and communication materials to make the public aware of the new service that would go a long way to build up ridership.

### 8.1.6 INTERNAL STAFF

The successful proponent will provide all necessary staff to run the transit service, including call center service to handle customer service calls. However, it would be important to have one or two staff who can coordinate and work closely with the successful

contractor to ensure the readiness to operate the service but also to coordinate and communicate daily requests that customers or Council might have to the contractor.

## 8.2 POST-LAUNCH IMPLEMENTATION

Once the transit service launches in 2027, there are several activities and decisions that need to be made so the transit service can be successful and is able to transition to a permanent service. The following sections summarize the key activities that need to take place.

### 8.2.1 PILOT PHASE

The pilot phase is forecasted to start sometime in 2027 to align with the Moodie Station opening. The pilot phase is anticipated to be three years and would conclude in 2029.

### 8.2.2 TRANSIT SERVICE CONTRACT EXTENSION

The Town would need to provide the service provider with sufficient time whether to extend the existing contract prior to the end of the pilot project. After the pilot project, it will move the project into a more permanent phase and likely will impact the type of funding the municipality would need to pursue. Should the Town wish not to extend the contract with the existing service provider, then they should give themselves sufficient time to start preparations for the new procurement process.

### 8.2.3 CAPITAL FUNDING AND TRANSIT VEHICLE PROCUREMENT

Should the Town wish to procure transit vehicles after the pilot phase, then the Town should explore capital funding and begin the application process before the pilot phase ends. This will provide the Town with the funding envelope to purchase vehicles or continue to rely on the service provider's service fleet. The details on funding opportunities are listed in Section 7.5. The Town should advance the purchase of the transit vehicle towards the end of the pilot project to ensure the vehicle is available at the start of the permanent service. The cost of a typical vehicle that accommodates 16-to-20 passengers can range from $150,000 to $200,000 (assuming 2025 cost).

# 9.0 MONITORING PLAN

This section provides information on how Carleton Place can monitor trends, financials and gauge reactions to the new transit service. Diligent monitoring will be important to the success of the pilot project and help inform whether to continue the service beyond the pilot project phase.

The forecasts developed in this feasibility study stem from informed assumptions and best practices related to transit demand, ridership, fare structure, capital and operating costs and funding availability. However, it will be critical for the municipality to develop metrics to monitor and track the operational and financial performance of the service, enabling course-corrections and refinements to better serve its customers. A monitoring plan will help the Town capture, manage risks and ensure the service moves towards successful implementation.

## 9.1 OPERATION METRICS

The following operation metrics should be tracked and monitored. These metrics are by no means an exhaustive list and can be adjusted as required:

- On-Time Performance: This metric is one of the key indicators that drive customer satisfaction. In regard to the commuter route, it may be more critical to monitor the second trip from the Carleton Place Arena (during morning peak) and Moodie LRT Station (during afternoon peak) to ensure the vehicle is not late past the scheduled time [19]. The on-time performance would provide an indication of transit vehicle travel times and if the schedule would require adjustments. If targets are not met, then schedule adjustment would need to be considered which could include adjusting time intervals between time points to reflect running time. It also should be noted that the schedule may

[19] The transit service should aim to have trips to depart no earlier than the scheduled time and no later than 5 minutes past the schedule time at time points

require adjustments to align with the OC Transpo LRT departure times once the station is open and operational. For local on-demand, the on-time performance should monitor if trips arrive within the pick-up window, which typically may be within 10-to-15 minutes from the start of the pick-up window. Should vehicles consistently be late outside of the pickup window, it could be one of the factors (beside rejection rate) to indicate that demand is exceeding capacity.

- **Other Metrics**: The service provider as part of the booking software should be able to provide other tracking metrics that include average daily riders, average daily rejections, trip status (cancelled, no show, etc.). These statistics would capture service performance and ridership using the service to help the Town adjust as required.

## 9.2 FINANCIAL METRICS

It is important to establish financial metrics to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of the transit service. These metrics may include:

- **Transit Ridership and Revenue**: These are the main measures of the success of the service which indicates the success of the system.
- **Boardings Per Hour**: This is determined by the total ridership of the service (either monthly, daily or by a specific period) divided by the service hours operated. The goal of the transit service is to increase this metric which would translate to higher service utilization. Typically, through peer review and given the geographic size area of Carleton Place, a local on-demand service has maximum effective trips per hour which is in the range of 5 to 8 boardings per hour. If this range is achieved, the service should be monitored closely to determine if additional improvements could be considered to meet the increase in demand (such as adding an additional vehicle or considering a fixed route system).
- **Rides per Capita**: This metric is determined by dividing the ridership by the total population of Carleton Place to get an idea of how well the service is utilized by the Town.
- **Net Cost per Trip**: This metric is determined by dividing the net operating cost by the total number of trips. The net operating cost accounts for the Town's contribution, less fare revenue and includes external revenues (funds).
- **Cost Recovery**: This measures the revenue from ridership divided by total operating cost. It would provide the Town with an idea of the percentage of cost recovered through fares. Typically, cost recovery for a new transit service for smaller municipalities ranges between 10% to 15%.

## 9.3 USER AND COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

Another important measure is to make sure first the community is aware (through promotion and marketing) of the transit service and overall is satisfied with the service. Through customer and community surveys, the Town should be able to monitor the responses to the service and be able to proactively adjust so that the service meets expectations.

## 9.4 MONITORING PROGRAM

The following monitoring program should be considered during the pilot project to ensure successful implementation of the transit service:

- **Operation Metrics**: For the first year, specifically the on-time performance should be monitored frequently. As service progresses in years 2 and 3 of the pilot project, monthly monitoring should be considered.
- **Financial Metrics**: For the first year, specifically financial metrics related to ridership, revenue and boardings per hour should be monitored frequently. As service progresses in years 2 and 3 of the pilot project, monthly monitoring should be considered.
- **User and Community Experience**: Customer surveys can be undertaken in the first year, one in the first quarter of service operation and the other in Q3/Q4 to ensure customer expectations are met. Periodic awareness and surveys should be considered for subsequent years to continue monitoring the progress of the transit service.