



## TOWNSHIP OF EDWARDSBURGH CARDINAL ACTION ITEM

**Committee:** Regular Council

**Date:** February 24, 2025

**Department:** CAO

**Topic:** River Route Ridership

**Purpose:** As requested at Committee of the Whole – Administration and Operations, staff was asked to provide ridership numbers by community to assess usage.

**Background:** At the February 10, 2025, Committee of the Whole – Administration and Operations meeting it was requested that the CAO provide detailed ridership numbers by Township to assess value to the community to justify the spending.

On February 20<sup>th</sup> a meeting was held with the CAO's from Prescott and Augusta to discuss the River Route. It was agreed that the CAO's will meet more regularly to ensure there is proper education and promotion of the River Route to all residents and to assess stops and perhaps alter the route to draw more people from Augusta.

Unfortunately, they do not track individual usage of the bus anymore. However, the bus is now installed with Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) which tracks where the doors are opened. For the first week of usage, the AVL indicated that 58% of the stops were in the Edwardsburgh Cardinal Township. The CAO's will meet again in March or April to go over the data when there is a larger sample size.

The new bus, as indicated in the last report, qualifies for potential grant funding and Prescott will be applying for this funding that will cover 80% of the cost of the bus. The remaining will be covered by reserves already in place so there will be no extra costs incurred other than the agreed upon \$30,000 amount for 2025.

**Policy Implications:** The partnership agreement expires on March 31, 2025. The agreement requires each partner municipality to provide written notice by February 28 of their intention to either renew for the upcoming 12-month period or their wish to terminate participation in the agreement.

**Strategic Plan Implications:** Aligns with the strategic pillars of Liveable Community and Good Governance. 1.1 - seek out opportunities with neighbouring municipalities and organizations to enhance the community living experience and 2.3 - ensure that services delivered are effective and efficient.

**Financial Considerations:** Each of the three municipalities contributed \$30,000 for the 12-month period, which was sufficient to cover the operating costs for 2024. A contribution from each municipality of \$30,000 for 2025 will be sufficient to cover the operating costs. Our contributions in prior years were covered through the modernization reserve fund, however this fund is now used up and must be funded through taxation.

**Recommendation:** THAT Council: 1) Renew the River Route Transit Service Partnership Agreement for the upcoming period of April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026; and 2) Direct staff to work with the Town of Prescott staff to explore funding options to support a new bus purchase and expanded hours of operation and return with details for consideration; and 3) Include our portion (upset of \$30,000) into the 2025 budget and cover the expense through general taxation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. K.', is located above a horizontal line.

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CAO