

Transit Master Plan



Staff Report DSR-037-26

To: Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Members of Council

From: Brandon Correia, Manager of Planning

Date: March 25, 2026

Executive Summary:

- The Transit Master Plan outlines a 10-year strategy for delivering local transit service in Innisfil, providing recommendations for policy changes and future service arrangements.
- Fixed-route services and a co-mingled dedicated on-demand/specialized transit service will be introduced under a phased approach, informed by implementation triggers.
- Rideshare services will continue to deliver services as part of Innisfil Transit, under a more equitable and sustainable distance-based rideshare fare.
- An extension of the Multiple Youth-Based Voucher Pilot Program respecting the number of passengers which can be booked on a single trip, is recommended to provide a smoother transition to a rideshare policy change.

Recommendation:

1. **That Staff Report DSR-037-26 regarding Transit Master Plan dated March 25, 2026, be received; and**
2. **That Council approve the Transit Master Plan as described in this report including the immediate implementation of Stage One; and**
3. **That the Multiple Youth-Based Voucher Pilot be extended to December 31, 2026; and**
4. **That Council authorize Staff to make the necessary changes to implement a distance-based fare structure Town-wide and eliminate the use of hubs and flat rate non-hub subsidy as outlined in this report.**

Background:

The Town of Innisfil commenced work on developing a Transit Master Plan (PLN 91) in October 2024, with Left Turn Right Turn (LTRT) serving as the consultant on the project. This Plan will support the evolution of local public transit services in Innisfil over a ten-year horizon. The Transit Master Plan is being presented to Town Council for approval.

This report provides an overview of the vision and recommendations of the Transit Master Plan, including a summary of the community engagement that informed the direction and outcomes. It provides an overview of the range of future options for local transit in Innisfil presented in the second round. It also includes information on factors that have been considered in informing the Transit Master Plan.

Analysis/Consideration:

This section of the report provides a summary of community engagement that has taken place, integration of Simcoe County LINX, recommended direction for future service delivery and fare structure, potential private-public partnerships for shuttles, and the option to extend the Multiple Youth-Based Voucher Pilot Program.

Community Engagement Summary

The Project Team has conducted two rounds of community engagement to receive public input on current strengths and challenges, experiences, and future priorities for transit in Innisfil. All information about the project, including public notices, surveys, and additional information, is hosted on Innisfil's [Get Involved Webpage](#).

First Round of Community Engagement: Current State and Needs

The first round focused on the current state and needs of transit in Innisfil, as outlined in the [What We Heard Report: Current State and Needs](#) which encompassed three public open houses and a survey. The survey was made available online and in physical format at Innisfil Town Hall and Innisfil Public Library locations from December 10, 2024, to January 24, 2025. A total of 588 responses were garnered.

Furthermore, Town staff gathered direct input from the public through attending three Mobile Seniors Active Living Centre sessions and two Teen Night events, in support of receiving feedback from senior and youth members of the community. Town staff provided an update on the Transit Master Plan to the Innisfil Accessibility Advisory Committee (IAAC) at its meeting on March 11, 2025. A second updated was provided to the IAAC at its May 13, 2025 meeting during the second round of community engagement.

Overall, the first round of community engagement helped develop a [Background Report](#) and [Technical Memorandum](#) for the project, as well as options for what the future of local transit in Innisfil could look like before the project progressed to the next phases.

As noted in the Background Report, several themes on the current and potential future state of transit in Innisfil could be formulated from open house engagement and survey responses. These themes included expressions on the following matters:

- Accommodating greater passenger capacity on trips
- Affordability of using transit
- Better access to essential services and particular areas of the town
- Better accommodating families with young children and seniors
- Connectivity with neighbouring and regional transit systems
- Interest in fixed route transit
- More accessible transit experiences
- More reliable wait and trip times
- Public understanding of the financial aspects of running a transit system
- Safe, reliable and accessible transit for youth
- Value of door-to-door service under current system

Second Round of Community Engagement: Transit to 2034

As outlined in the [What We Heard Report: Transit to 2034](#), three public open houses were held in April 2025 for the second round of community engagement. Four options for the future of transit in Innisfil were presented and attendees had an opportunity to provide their feedback from April until mid-June of 2025. This round of engagement garnered a total of 237 responses.

There were two versions of the survey for the second round of engagement, one geared toward the employment community and the others to residents. Both versions were available on the Get Involved Innisfil website, with physical copies of the community member-oriented survey available at Innisfil Town Hall and Innisfil Public Library locations, as well as community events such as Neighbourhood Nights. The Town's Economic Development department assisted in the development of employer-specific questions and distributing surveys to employers.

A summary of the survey results is as follows:

- Most of the survey respondents, employers and residents combined, indicated support for the Town increasing spending to improve transit services.
- Lower levels of support expressed for increases in property taxes to fund improvements.
- Most employers indicated a potential willingness to help subsidize public transit access to their locations.

Employers: Engagement Summary

Employer feedback has consistently highlighted the challenges of recruitment because of access to transit services. Based on feedback from employers, key areas of the Town could benefit from predictable and cost-effective fixed route transit or shuttle services, specifically by getting current and prospective employees to and from work. These key areas include Innisfil Heights, the future Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre's (RVH) south campus including Civic Campus lands, and Friday Harbour.

Simcoe County LINX

The introduction of Simcoe County LINX Route 7, previously slated to launch in 2025, has been delayed due to supply challenges with obtaining vehicles and as a result, the route is now anticipated to launch in 2027. Ultimately, this route will serve as a regional service connecting Barrie, Innisfil, and Bradford by offering service between Barrie South and Bradford GO Stations. The regional service offers fewer stops to facilitate longer, faster travel between main hubs. While this will be the first introduction of traditional local bus services to the Town, it will not serve as a local service which makes frequent, short-distance stops to provide intracommunity mobility. The exact routing is under development and has not been finalized.

Planning staff have participated in the ongoing Simcoe County Transit Service Delivery Review to provide local insights from Innisfil Transit's operations, and to inform future regional transit recommendations to best serve the Innisfil community. Town and County staff continue to discuss integration between Simcoe County LINX and local transit systems, on matters such as fare payment and scheduling. The County's 2023 Transportation Master Plan indicated the need for a transit governance review. Town staff continue to participate and monitor the County's work underway as the governance review, and its potential impacts to the Town, is anticipated in a future phase of the County's ongoing Simcoe County Transit Service Delivery Review.

Recommended Direction for Future Service Delivery

Staff recommend that future transit services in Innisfil be introduced through a phased approach, over three stages. Under this approach, new services or service adjustments would be implemented once certain implementation triggers are reached. Rideshare services would remain as part of Innisfil Transit throughout all three stages, albeit with a revised fare structure and availability as described in greater depth in this report's Recommended Direction for Fare Structure section.

Stage One

The first stage of implementation primarily involves changes to the rideshare fare structure, along with other concurrent changes in rideshare policies and subsequent ridership and

development-based triggers. It is expected that rideshare services will continue to be the Town's primary service during the initial years of implementation.

As illustrated in the Stage 1 map of Appendix K (Network Maps), found in Attachment 1 to this report, the two initial fixed routes include the Alcona Loop route, which would operate in a one-way loop around Alcona, and an Alcona-Stroud-Barrie South route. Development-based triggers for the Alcona Loop route and Alcona-Stroud-Barrie South route include alignment with the opening of the Innisfil GO Station and completion of the first phase of the Orbit development for the former route and alignment with the development of the RVH South Campus and Town Campus lands for the latter route.

The route connecting Barrie South GO with Alcona would serve the busiest Innisfil Transit hub and a community with the highest ridership on Innisfil Transit. The Alcona Loop route would address the need for servicing short, local trips in that community. Combined, these two routes would serve areas of the Town with the highest ridership on Innisfil Transit including the most frequented transit hub, Barrie South GO. The former route would be especially beneficial prior to the implementation of Simcoe County LINX Route 7 (which is illustrated in a preliminary routing in all maps included in Appendix K). Staff recommend further consultation in future with the City of Barrie regarding the feasibility of partnering on a route connecting Innisfil with the City. While staff see potential synergies and advantages of a potential partnership with the City of Barrie to extend fixed-route services, further analysis and discussion would be required as part of the implementation stages described in this report.

Throughout the Transit Master Plan review process there have been ongoing discussions with Uber as the Town's current service provider for on-demand transit. More specifically Uber has reviewed and had discussions with staff and the consultant on the implementation of the new fare structure proposed in Stage One to ensure from a technical standpoint this can be achieved in addition to any other technical challenges to implement the other policy changes recommendations in the TMP. Uber has confirmed their support for the recommended changes, where appropriate.

Staff are requesting Council approval of the first stage of the Plan for implementation as outlined in the recommendations section of the report. Staff anticipate returning to Council in the future on the implementation of Stage Two or Three coinciding with the associated implementation triggers outlined in the Master Plan and when financial considerations would be more accurately represented based on inflation and timing for future budget considerations.

Stage Two

Based on rideshare ridership figures and possibilities for financial contributions through partnerships, the second stage could see the introduction of two additional fixed routes. One of which could connect Alcona with Innisfil Heights and the other which would connect Georgian Downs with Barrie. The Innisfil Heights route would run three round trips daily with limited stops, also serving the Town campus in its routing between a major employment centre and population centre.

While both of these routes have ridership triggers to guide when they should launch, the implementation of the Georgian Downs route would depend on Barrie's willingness to reach an acceptable cost-sharing arrangement to fund the service. Higher funding contributions from Barrie could lower the ridership trigger figure for the Georgian Downs route as could contributions from partners, such as employers, on the ridership trigger figure for the Innisfil Heights route.

Additionally in this stage, ridership in both the existing Alcona Loop and the Barrie South GO-Alcona route, as well as substantial completion of the Orbit's first phase, would warrant two-way service and an extension of the Alcona Loop route respectively. Service between Barrie South GO and Stroud would also become more frequent pending ridership figures and a funding arrangement with the City of Barrie.

Stage Three

Substantial completion of the Northwest Precinct of the Orbit is seen as the major trigger for changes to fixed routes under this final stage. The Alcona-Orbit fixed route would be introduced, connecting the transit-oriented community with the Innisfil Beach Road corridor. The Alcona Loop route would be refined to focus service on a more east-west orientation in Alcona, and the route connecting Barrie South GO to Alcona would now extend southward to Lefroy. Ridership-based triggers for fixed routes would be based on the point at which the municipal cost of providing rideshare services would be equal or in excess of providing fixed route service in a given area.

The third stage would also see the introduction of a dedicated on-demand service, which would provide specialized accessible service throughout the Town as well as offer service to those travelling in designated dedicated on-demand areas (as seen in Appendix K of Attachment 1). The introduction of co-mingled on-demand and specialized service would be based on a policy decision by the Town rather than a ridership- or development-based implementation trigger.

Potential Future Service Expansion

The services to be delivered as outlined in the Transit Master Plan would be responsive to where and when transit ridership is occurring (be it on rideshare, fixed-route, or dedicated on-demand services) as well as other factors, such as development in particular parts of Innisfil, which could impact transit usage over a ten-year horizon or beyond.

The Transit Master Plan lists a number of opportunities for service expansion, be it in form of new fixed routes, extensions of routes or operating hours, based on implementation triggers specific to such expansions. Of note, these triggers include significant residential development in: Northwest Alcona to justify extensions of the Alcona-Orbit and Alcona Loop routes to that area; significant residential development in Stroud to justify adjustments to fixed route service between Stroud and Barrie South GO, and Innisfil Transit ridership in the vicinity of 9th Line & 25th Sideroad and Sandy Cove to warrant extensions of the Alcona Loop service.

A fixed route could serve Friday Harbour if Innisfil Transit trip volumes within an alignment of such a route and connected areas with fixed route services generate total costs equal to or exceeding the estimated cost of operating a fixed route serving Friday Harbour. These ridership thresholds could be lowered for the creation of such a new route should financial support from stakeholders in that area be available.

In future, the operating hours of fixed routes could be extended and adjusted if it is determined that costs for rideshare trips during times that fixed routes are not operating are equal to or exceeding estimated costs of fixed route services during those times. With respect to ridership-based triggers as a whole, the Transit Master Plan recommends that ridership data be reviewed in six-month periods to determine if service changes should be made.

Fare Structure

Given the significant effect of fare structures on ridership and municipal costs, this section outlines the recommended fare approach, as informed by observations of the current structure.

The current fare structure is two pronged. It encompasses flat rider fares for eligible trips which involve travel to and/or from a hub; and, it additionally offers flat subsidies applied to rider fares on eligible trips which do not involve any designated Innisfil Transit hubs. Over time, as the population of Innisfil continues to grow and thus ridership increases, the cost of providing the current subsidy structure becomes less financially sustainable for the Town. With increased ridership, a rideshare-based system using relatively low-capacity vehicles, as Innisfil Transit does, runs into a situation resembling a diseconomy of scale, as the need for more vehicles to meet ridership demand (and their expenses doing so) would be more pressing than managing increased ridership in a fixed route-based system.

From an equity perspective, the current structure of fare costs, particularly for hubs, has limitations from both a geographic and socioeconomic perspective.

With regards to geography, trips involving an Innisfil Transit Hub, as they charge a flat rate to riders, receive a higher amount of subsidy than trips which serve two non-hub locations within Innisfil, in which the subsidy is capped at \$4. As such, trips involving a hub that travels a shorter distance than another one (such as a trip from Barrie South GO to Stroud as opposed to one from Barrie South GO to Cookstown) are subsidized less, with passenger fares covering a higher proportion of the trip than longer trips.

As noted in the Background Report, the current fare structure may disproportionately benefit higher-income passengers who engage in long-distance commuting as opposed to lower-income individuals who make shorter, more frequent trips to carry out essential tasks such as medical visits or grocery shopping by subsidizing their trips at a higher rate – notwithstanding the fact that the Rizzardo Health & Wellness Centre and Innisfil Food Bank are Innisfil Transit Hubs. This disparity in trip subsidies could be seen as slightly offset by the Monthly Trip Limit Increase and Fair Transit programs offered by the Town on an application basis, with especially rigid testing means entailed for the latter program.

Staff recommend that an updated fare structure, which would be distance-based as described in the Transit Master Plan, be implemented with the aim of providing an equitable trip subsidy based on the distance of a trip within the Town. This would include the elimination of hubs and flat rate non-hub subsidy and solely result in a distance-based fare.

The Transit Master Plan submits that such a distance-based fare structure entail Innisfil Transit riders paying a minimum fare of \$3.25, with the Town subsidizing up to \$10 of the trip, and riders pay any remaining trip fare depending on the distance travelled. Implementation of this will result in increased costs for some riders depending on the current cost of their trip as outlined further in the financial considerations section. Council does have the option to adjust the \$ 10 trip subsidy; however this does have impacts on the overall costs of the transit program and maintaining the current approved annual budget.

The new fare structure should be accompanied by an increase in the standard monthly trip limit to 50 trips per month as well as an increase to the maximum number of passengers that can be booked on an Innisfil Transit trip (currently set at 2) to align with rideshare vehicle capacity. Additionally, Bradford GO Station would now be included as part of the Innisfil Transit service area under this revised fare structure, in the same manner that Barrie South GO would continue to be included under this distance-based, rather than hub-based, fare structure. The Plan's recommended fare structure would permit travel to or from other locations outside of the Town of Innisfil with a \$2.50 subsidy applied to the rideshare fare.

The fare structure for rideshare services, along with service areas and hours of availability, would be updated throughout the Plan's three stages, factoring in the implementation of fixed route services. Fixed route services would have a fare structure in line with other transit systems that operate such services, with \$3 fares for adult single rides and concession rates available for monthly passes and target demographics, such as youth and those with low incomes, as outlined in Section 4.6 of the Transit Master Plan.

Potential Private-Public Partnerships for Shuttles

As previously noted, a majority of employer respondents to the second-round survey indicated a potential willingness to subsidize public transit access to their locations. This finding could merit an exploration into the role that employers could play in delivering transit access to their locations. Innisfil Heights and Friday Harbour are of particular interest, as both areas contain significant concentrations of workplaces that are not planned to be served by Simcoe LINX Route 7 and may generate ridership more suitable for fixed-route services. Furthermore, fixed route services to Friday Harbour and Innisfil Heights could possibly serve visitors to those sites.

Multiple Youth-Based Voucher Pilot Extension

As noted in [Staff Report DSR-029-25 \(Innisfil Transit – 2024 Results and Update\)](#) and the subsequent Background Report for the Transit Master Plan, the two-seat limit on trips booked with Uber for Innisfil Transit has been a point of concern with Innisfil residents who travel with multiple children/teens.

The aforementioned Staff Report included a recommendation that a Multiple Youth-Based Voucher Pilot take place for a ten (10) month period, which was approved at the February 26, 2025, Town Council meeting. Staff then worked with Uber to design a voucher that would allow multiple children/teens to travel on the same Innisfil Transit trip booked on their parent/guardian's account. This voucher enables these riders to utilize UberX and Uber XL services, which are better oriented to serve families travelling with multiple children/teens. Of note, the voucher only applies to trips that involve flat-fare Innisfil Transit hub locations, up to a monthly limit of 15 trips.

The pilot launched in May of 2025, with a maximum limit of 150 vouchers to be issued. 13 applicants were approved for the pilot program. As the pilot was approved for a ten (10) month period, this positioned the end date for the pilot in February 2026. Staff recommend that the pilot program be extended until the end of 2026. Such an extension would allow for a smoother transition to the removal of the two-seat limit for rideshare trips booked with Innisfil Transit, a policy change recommended in the Transit Master Plan's first stage, and would be financially feasible owing to its under-budget status.

Community Strategic Plan Alignment:

This report aligns with Objectives 2.2 and 2.4 – Ensure a safe and reliable transportation network – of Priority #3 – Connect.

Financial Consideration:

For the purpose of providing Council with an estimate for consideration, Staff have reviewed the financial aspects of the Transit Master Plan. Based on these figures, municipal operating costs on Innisfil Transit are estimated to be \$1.61 million under the plan's first stage, followed by costs of \$2.08 million and \$3.37 million under the second and third stage respectively (all figures not adjusted for inflation).

Approval of the Transit Master Plan would authorize staff to proceed with the Plan's first stage, including implementing the new distance-based fare structure, and timing of the second and

third stages are to be determined in future pending the identified implementation triggers. Therefore, the costs of the future stages will be planned for and brought back to Council through future budgeting exercises, and evaluated in relation to other Town master plans, strategic priorities, and overall financial capacity.

The 2026 transit operating budget includes a net subsidy of \$1,873,636 (gross Uber transit costs less user fee revenue). As noted above, the estimated cost for Stage 1 is \$1.61 million, which is lower than the approved 2026 budget, primarily due to reduced rideshare subsidies as fixed-route services are introduced.

The new fare structure applies a flat fare of \$3.25 to any trip, with the Town subsidizing up to \$10 additional, and any trips costing beyond \$13.25 would have the balance charged to the rider. The fare structure would be a reduced cost to the Town from the existing average subsidy, a reduced cost to riders for short-distance trips, and an increased cost to riders of long-distance trips.

Capital costs in the Transit Master Plan are limited to bus stop infrastructure largely because it recommends that the municipality seek a turn-key service provider to operate Innisfil Transit service providers, which would include vehicle provision. These capital costs amount to \$80,000 for the first stage, \$10,000 for the second stage, and \$200,000 for the third stage. Staff propose that Stage 1 capital costs be funded through operating budget savings realized from implementing Stage 1.

With regard to an extension of the Multiple Youth-Based Voucher Pilot Program, Staff estimated that the initial pilot would cost between \$20,000 - \$60,000, with provincial gas tax funds offsetting the cost. The pilot has cost approximately \$3,800 to date resulting in available funds to continue to meet the costs of the pilot program.

Local Impact:

Innisfil Transit provides an accessible and flexible service available across the entire Town and therefore, potentially impacts every resident of Innisfil.

Options/Alternatives:

Council has the option to not adopt the Transit Master Plan as prepared and can provide direction for the project team to consider a different direction and contain outcomes that vary from what is currently being presented. Any such changes in the project at this stage would be out of scope and have further financial implications.

Additionally, Council could choose not to extend the Multiple Youth-Based Voucher Pilot, or choose to extend it for a longer or shorter duration than recommended. Furthermore, Council has the option to change the parameters of the vouchers made available, such as the maximum permitted number of vouchers to be issued, and types of trips and number of rides permitted through the voucher. Any alternate combination than that included in the recommendation will have alternative financial impacts than those noted above.

Conclusion:

Staff recommend that Council approve the Transit Master Plan, as described in this report. This would include:

1. The immediate implementation of Stage One;
2. Extending the Multiple Youth-Based Voucher Pilot to the end of 2026; and
3. Making the necessary changes to implement a distance-based fare structure Town-wide and eliminate the use of hubs and flat rate non-hub subsidy as outlined in this report.

The Transit Master Plan is based on a 10-year timeframe consisting of three stages which entail early fare and policy changes to existing rideshare services, the introduction of fixed route services guided by ridership- and development-based implementation triggers, and the introduction of co-mingled dedicated on-demand and specialized accessible transit services based on policy decision-making on the Town's part.

Considering the length of the Transit Master Plan's timeframe and possibilities for new arrangements with external actors (such as other municipalities and employers) regarding transit service provision, it is designed to be adaptable to changing circumstances and responsive to opportunities rather than serve as a rigid prescription for local transit policy in Innisfil. As outlined in the Transit Master Plan, Innisfil Transit will be continuously monitored to address the effectiveness and efficiency of its services.

Prepared By:

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Approved By:

Andria Leigh, Director of Planning & Growth

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – 10-Year Transit Master Plan with Appendices

Reference Material:

[Community Strategic Plan](#)

[Simcoe County Transit Service Delivery Review – Project Update](#)

[Staff Report DSR-029-25 \(Innisfil Transit – 2024 Results and Update\)](#)

[Transit Master Plan Background Report](#)

[Transit Master Plan Technical Memorandum](#)

[What We Heard Report: Current State and Needs](#)

[What We Heard Report: Transit to 2034](#)