

# UNITED COUNTIES OF LEEDS AND GRENVILLE

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## 7.3 United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

### Background / Context

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (Leeds and Grenville) are located in eastern Ontario along the St. Lawrence River, between the cities of Kingston and Ottawa. Leeds and Grenville are bordered by the Frontenac County to the west, by Lanark County and the City of Ottawa to the north, by the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry to the east, and by New York State to the south. The geographic area covers 3,384 square kilometres.

The local government consists of 10 municipalities, which are:

- Township of Athens;
- Township of Augusta;
- Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal;
- Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley;
- Township of Front of Yonge;
- Township of Leeds & the Thousand Islands;
- Municipality of North Grenville;
- Township of Rideau Lakes;
- Village of Merrickville-Wolford; and
- Village of Westport.

The City of Brockville and Towns of Gananoque and Prescott are separated from the County administration, but remain part of the County for census purposes. These are referred to as Partner Municipalities. **Figure 7** displays a map of the County. The largest urban area is the City of Brockville, population 21,870 (2011 census).

Figure 7 - United Counties of Leeds & Grenville



(Source: United Counties of Leeds & Grenville)



### Population

Each municipality has its own unique characteristics, including demographics, employment base and transportation needs. The largest municipality within Leeds and Grenville, by population, is North Grenville followed by Rideau Lakes. **Table 12** provides a summary of the size, population and population density of each municipality within the United Counties.

**Table 12 - Population Density Summary**

| Municipality   | Land (sq. km)  | 2011 Population | Population Density (pop/sq. km) |
|--|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Athens   | 127.8          | 3,195           | 25.0                            |
| Augusta  | 314.7          | 7,615           | 24.2                            |
| Edwardsburgh/Cardinal                                  | 312.3          | 7,130           | 22.8                            |
| Elizabethtown-Kitley                                   | 557.8          | 9,965           | 17.9                            |
| Front of Yonge   | 127.9          | 2,745           | 21.5                            |
| Leeds & the Thousand Islands                           | 612.5          | 9,505           | 15.5                            |
| North Grenville  | 352.1          | 15,455          | 43.9                            |
| Rideau Lakes   | 729.1          | 10,460          | 14.3                            |
| Merrickville-Wolford                                   | 214.5          | 2,920           | 13.6                            |
| Westport   | 1.7            | 645             | 379.4                           |
| <b>United Counties of Leeds and Grenville</b>          | <b>3,350.4</b> | <b>69,635</b>   | <b>20.8</b>                     |
| Brockville   | 20.9           | 23,100          | 1105.3                          |
| Gananoque  | 7.0            | 4,369           | 624.1                           |
| Prescott   | 5.0            | 4,284           | 856.8                           |
| <b>Leeds and Grenville with Partner Municipalities</b> | <b>3,383.3</b> | <b>101,388</b>  | <b>30.0</b>                     |

(Source: Stats Can 2011 Community Profiles)

The majority of Leeds and Grenville are rural agricultural and forested land with urban areas scattered throughout. In 2011, the population was 69,635. This represents a 0.1 percent increase from the 2006 census.

Growth is anticipated to occur at a more rapid rate than in the past, but is still considered to be modest. The population is forecasted to reach 74,620 by 2031. This represents a seven percent growth rate between 2011 and 2031. The highest growth will occur in North Grenville followed by Edwardsburgh/Cardinal. The growth in North Grenville is likely focused on Kemptville.

The three Partner Municipalities are also anticipated to grow at a similar rate, with the majority of growth occurring in Brockville.

This is illustrated in **Table 13** below.

The demographic profile of the existing population is illustrated in **Figure 8**. The County has an aging population, where 20 percent of the population is over the age of 65. This is well above the provincial average of 14.6 percent.

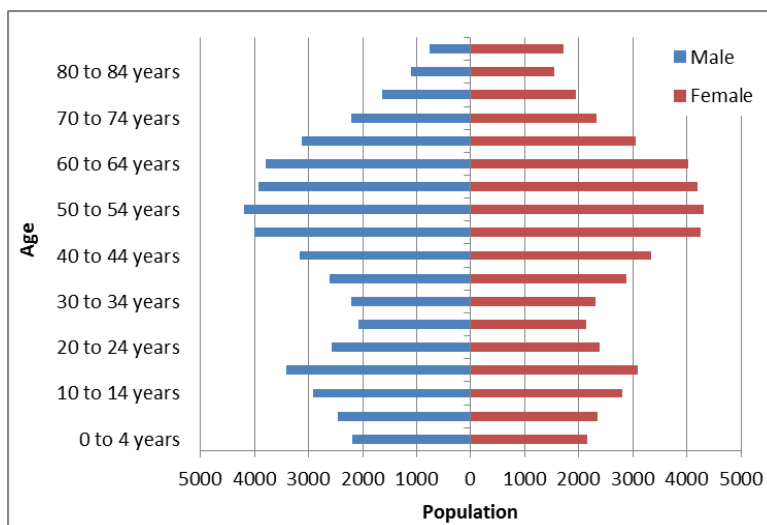
**Table 13 - Forecasted Population Growth in Leeds and Grenville**

| Municipality   | Population     |                |              |             |
|--|----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
|  | 2011           | 2031           | Change       | % Growth    |
| Athens   | 3,195          | 3,260          | 65           | 2%          |
| Augusta  | 7,615          | 7,790          | 175          | 2.3%        |
| Edwardsburgh/Cardinal                                    | 7,130          | 7,650          | 520          | 7.3%        |
| Elizabethtown-Kitley                                     | 9,965          | 9,970          | 5            | 0%          |
| Front of Yonge   | 2,745          | 2,830          | 85           | 3.1%        |
| Leeds & the Thousand Islands                             | 9,505          | 9,910          | 405          | 4.3%        |
| North Grenville  | 15,455         | 18,350         | 2,895        | 18.7%       |
| Rideau Lakes   | 10,460         | 11,090         | 630          | 6%          |
| Merrickville-Wolford                                     | 2,920          | 3,060          | 140          | 4.8%        |
| Westport   | 645            | 710            | 65           | 10%         |
| <b>United Counties of Leeds and Grenville</b>            | <b>69,635</b>  | <b>74,620</b>  | <b>4,985</b> | <b>7.2%</b> |
| Brockville   | 23,100         | 24,600         | 1,500        | 6.5%        |
| Gananoque  | 4,369          | 4,815          | 446          | 10.2%       |
| Prescott*  | 4,284          | 4,719*         | 435          | 10%         |
| <b>Leeds and Grenville with Partner Municipalities**</b> | <b>101,388</b> | <b>108,754</b> | <b>7,366</b> | <b>7.3%</b> |

\* Population forecasts only available for the year 2023

\*\* Partner Municipalities are Brockville, Gananoque and Prescott

**Figure 8 - Leeds and Grenville Population Pyramid**



(Source: Stats Can 2011 Community Profiles)

## Employment

The majority of employment is located within the City of Brockville. Within the United Counties, the majority of employment opportunities are located in North Grenville followed by Elizabethtown-Kitley.

Employment within the United Counties has been declining over the past five years. This decline is expected to stabilize to 2031, with some minor employment losses projected in Elizabethtown-Kitley (4.7 percent). With the population of the United Counties growing by 7.4 percent, this will mean less local employment opportunities for residents.

Employment in Brockville, will continue to grow by approximately 9.4 percent. **Table 14** illustrates the existing and forecasted employment within the United Counties and Partner Municipalities.

**Table 14 - Forecasted Employment Growth in Leeds and Grenville**

| Municipality   | Employment    |               |              |               |
|--|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|  | 2011          | 2031          | Change       | % Growth      |
| Athens   | 950           | 950           | 0            | 0%            |
| Augusta  | 1,040         | 1,040         | 0            | 0%            |
| Edwardsburgh/Cardinal                                    | 1,430         | 1,400         | -30          | -2.1%         |
| Elizabethtown-Kitley                                     | 2,560         | 2,440         | -120         | -4.7%         |
| Front of Yonge   | 410           | 410           | 0            | 0%            |
| Leeds & the Thousand Islands                             | 1,850         | 1,830         | -20          | -1.1%         |
| North Grenville  | 5,240         | 5,220         | -20          | -0.4%         |
| Rideau Lakes   | 1,420         | 1,430         | 10           | 0.7%          |
| Merrickville-Wolford                                     | 890           | 900           | 10           | 1.1%          |
| Westport   | 520           | 530           | 10           | 1.9%          |
| <b>United Counties of Leeds and Grenville</b>            | <b>16,310</b> | <b>16,150</b> | <b>-160</b>  | <b>-0.98%</b> |
| Brockville   | 14,190        | 15,520        | 1,330        | 9.4%          |
| Gananoque*   | N/A           | N/A           | N/A          | N/A           |
| Prescott*  | N/A           | N/A           | N/A          | N/A           |
| <b>Leeds and Grenville with Partner Municipalities**</b> | <b>30,500</b> | <b>31,670</b> | <b>1,170</b> | <b>3.8%</b>   |

\* Existing and Forecasted Employment not available

\*\* Partner Municipalities are Brockville, Gananoque and Prescott

Leeds and Grenville has experienced many changes over the past few decades. Many of the heavy industries have given way to light industrial businesses. The County is home to small, national and international companies and firms, including many in logistics and transportation, forestry, warehousing, pharmaceuticals and food processing, manufacturing and construction, accommodation and food services, management, agriculture, and health and trade.

The major employers in the County and Partner Municipalities are identified in **Table 15** and **16** respectively.

**Table 15 - Major Employers in Leeds and Grenville**

| Employer   | Sector                                | Total Employees 2014 | Municipality                   |
|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Burnbrae Frams Ltd.</b>                                 | Employment                            | 325                  | Elizabethtown-Kitley           |
| <b>Ingredion Canada Incorporated (formerly Casco Inc.)</b> | Employment                            | 215                  | Edwardsburgh/Cardinal          |
| <b>Prysmian Group</b>                                      | Employment                            | 200                  | Edwardsburgh/Cardinal          |
| <b>Kemptville Truck Centre Limited</b>                     | Population – Related                  | 200                  | North Grenville                |
| <b>Scalar Decisions Inc.</b>                               | Employment                            | 120                  | Leeds and the Thousand Islands |
| <b>Canada Border Service Agency Lansdowne</b>              | Public Admin / Health / Institutional | 120                  | Leeds and the Thousand Islands |
| <b>G. Tackaberry &amp; Sons Construction Co. Ltd.</b>      | Employment                            | 120                  | Athens                         |
| <b>eSolutionsGroup Ltd.</b>                                | Employment                            | 110                  | Front of Younge                |
| <b>730 Truck Stop Inc.</b>                                 | Employment                            | 100                  | Edwardsburgh/Caradinal         |
| <b>Invista (Canada) Company</b>                            | Employment                            | 100                  | Augusta                        |
| <b>University of Gelp, Kemptville Campus</b>               | Public Admin / Health / Institutional | 100                  | North Grenville                |
| <b>Valley Bus Lines</b>                                    | Employment                            | 100                  | North Grenville                |
| <b>ORMG</b>  | Employment                            | 85                   | North Grenville                |

Source: Draft Employment Lands Supply Analysis, MMM Group, June 2014



**Table 16 - Major Employers in the Partner Municipalities**

| Employer  | Sector                                | Total Employees 2014 | Municipality |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| <b>Upper Canada District School Board</b>               | Public Admin / Health / Institutional | 1,397                | Brockville   |
| <b>Brockville General Hospital (BGH)</b>                | Public Admin / Health / Institutional | 850                  | Brockville   |
| <b>Procter &amp; Gamble Inc. (P&amp;G)</b>              | Employment                            | 557                  | Brockville   |
| <b>Covidien (Ludlow Technical Products Canada Ltd.)</b> | Employment                            | 400                  | Gananoque    |
| <b>United Counties of Leeds and Grenville</b>           | Public Admin / Health / Institutional | 425                  | Brockville   |
| <b>OLG Casino Thousand Islands</b>                      | Population-related                    | 420                  | Gananoque    |
| <b>Trillium Health Care Products Inc.</b>               | Employment                            | 328                  | Brockville   |
| <b>3M Canada Company</b>                                | Employment                            | 300                  | Brockville   |
| <b>Walmart Brockville</b>                               | Population-related                    | 290                  | Brockville   |
| <b>Transcom</b>   | Employment                            | 276                  | Brockville   |
| <b>City of Brockville</b>                               | Public Admin / Health / Institutional | 275                  | Brockville   |
| <b>Kriska Transportation</b>                            | Employment                            | 260                  | Prescott     |
| <b>St. Lawrence Lodge</b>                               | Public Admin / Health / Institutional | 280                  | Brockville   |
| <b>Canarm Ltd.</b>                                      | Employment                            | 170                  | Brockville   |

Source: Draft Employment Lands Supply Analysis, MMM Group, June 2014

The primary employers in the area are located within the partner municipality of Brockville. The majority are in the public administration, health and institutional sectors.

The two major employers in Gananoque are the OLG Casino Thousand Islands and Covidien. The OLG Casino in Gananoque has 480 slots and 22 tables and employs 425 full and part-time employees from the region. During peak season, the Casino also generates a number of spin off employment opportunities in the tourism and hospitality industry. For a number of businesses in the Gananoque area, transportation can be a barrier to attract employment, particularly part-time or seasonal employment.

In Leeds and Grenville, the two largest employers are in the food manufacturing and processing sectors.

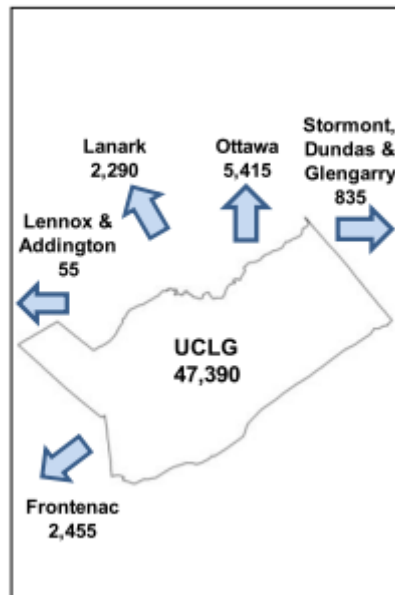
Tourism also plays an important role within the County, given its unique location near the St. Lawrence River and the 1000 Islands region, the historic Rideau Canal and the Frontenac Arch Biosphere.

### Travel Patterns

Resident travel patterns were also assessed to better understand the potential for a coordinated transportation framework. As illustrated in **Figure 9**, the travel patterns of Leeds and Grenville residents are fairly dispersed, with the majority working within the County and Partner Municipalities, but also a large number working in Ottawa, Lanark and Frontenac.

**Figure 10** outlines the primary destination from each municipality in Leeds and Grenville in more detail. Brockville, Ottawa and Smith Falls are the primary destinations of residents, depending on the municipality they reside in. This is followed by Kingston, Frontenac and other municipalities in Leeds and Grenville.

**Figure 9 - United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Commuting Patterns (2011)**



Source: Leeds Grenville Official Plan Phase Two Growth and Settlement Analysis: Member Municipal Growth Distribution, Draft – June 4, 2014 – Hemson Consulting

**Figure 10 - Top Three Destinations of Leeds and Grenville Commuters (2006 and 2011)**

| Table 17   |                   |                      |                      |
|--|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Top 3 Destinations of Leeds Grenville Commuters, 2006 & 2011 |                   |                      |                      |
| Municipality   | 2006              |                      |                      |
|  | 1st               | 2nd                  | 3rd                  |
| Athens   | Brockville        | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Smiths Falls         |
| Augusta  | Brockville        | Prescott             | Elizabethtown-Kitley |
| Edwardsburgh/Cardinal  | Prescott          | Ottawa               | Brockville           |
| Elizabethtown-Kitley   | Brockville        | Smiths Falls         | Ottawa               |
| Front of Yonge   | Brockville        | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Gananoque            |
| Leeds and the Thousand Islands                               | Gananoque         | Kingston             | Brockville           |
| Merrickville/Wolford   | Smiths Falls      | Ottawa               | North Grenville      |
| North Grenville  | Brockville        | Merrickville/Wolford | Gatineau             |
| Rideau Lakes   | Smiths Falls      | Westport             | Perth                |
| Westport   | Perth             | Kingston             | Smiths Falls         |
| UCLG Census Division*  | Ottawa            | Lanark               | Frontenac            |
| Municipality   | 2011              |                      |                      |
|  | 1st               | 2nd                  | 3rd                  |
| Athens   | Brockville        | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Smiths Falls         |
| Augusta  | Brockville        | Prescott             | Elizabethtown-Kitley |
| Edwardsburgh/Cardinal  | Brockville        | Ottawa               | Prescott             |
| Elizabethtown-Kitley   | Smiths Falls      | Ottawa               | Athens               |
| Front of Yonge   | Brockville        | Kingston             | Gananoque            |
| Leeds and the Thousand Islands                               | n/a               | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| Merrickville/Wolford   | Ottawa            | Smiths Falls         | North Grenville      |
| North Grenville  | Ottawa            | Brockville           | North Dundas         |
| Rideau Lakes   | Smiths Falls      | Kingston             | Perth                |
| Westport**   | Leeds & Grenville | Frontenac            |                      |
| UCLG Census Division*  | Ottawa            | Frontenac            | Lanark               |

\*includes Brockville, Gananoque and Prescott

\*\*No data available below the Census Division level.

Source: Leeds Grenville Official Plan Phase Two Growth and Settlement Analysis: Member Municipal Growth Distribution, Draft – June 4, 2014 – Hemson Consulting

## STEP 1 Identify Two or More Organizations that Share a Common Goal

The very first step in the process is to identify two or more parties that are willing to work together to explore the potential of a coordinated framework.

During the Leeds and Grenville stakeholder workshop, a number of organizations expressed an interest to be part of the solution and improve transportation services in the United Counties. They also expressed a desire to work together to assess whether a coordinated framework is right for them. Some of these organizations include:

1. **Every Kid in Our Communities** – While this community collaboration focuses on the needs of children and youth within Leeds and Grenville, there is also a strong interest in improving the overall mobility within the community. The past experience gained through their leadership role in the coordinated transportation pilot project will be valuable in any new discussions to improve transportation coordination with the county.
2. **United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and/or Local Municipalities** – Support from the County and each local municipality would allow the partnership to gain access to provincial gas tax funding and expand the resources available to provide community transportation.
3. **Existing Transportation Providers** – There was significant interest from a number of organizations that currently provide transportation services, including Wubs Transit, Kemptville Transportation Services, North Grenville Accessible Transportation and Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario. Each of these should be approached as part of the partnership.
4. **Local Agencies** – There were several local agencies in attendance at the workshop that do not provide transportation but have an interest enhancing mobility for their clients. Opportunities to contribute to the partnership need to be assessed as part of this initial task.

Confirmation of this group would need to take place through a series of working sessions and a commitment to work together documented through a memorandum of understanding. A lead organization would also need to be identified as a next step. Given its previous experience in pursuing a coordinated transportation framework, Every Kid in Our Communities would be a logical choice as a lead agency.

## STEP 2 Inventory Existing Transportation Services and Key Stakeholders

The next step in the process is to better understand transportation services that already exist as well as the various stakeholders and their ability to contribute to the transportation solution.

While the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville do not provide a county-wide public transit service, there is a mix of municipal and other transportation services that operate within the community.

The inventory of existing transportation service providers was conducted to identify the extent of service currently being provided within the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. **Table 17** provides a brief summary of existing services as identified through background research and the online survey conducted as part of this study region assessment. As identified below, there are limited subsidized transportation options within the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

It is important to note that the results presented below may be incomplete as not all organizations participated in the online survey. Where survey results were not obtained, a basic description of the service is provided.

**Table 17 - Existing Transportation Providers in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville**

| Organization                                       | Type                            |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Brockville Transit                                 | <b>Municipal Transit</b>        |
| VIA Rail   | <b>Inter-Regional Transit</b>   |
| Coach Canada                                       |                                 |
| Greyhound  |                                 |
| Canadian Mental Health Association Leeds Grenville | <b>Community Agency</b>         |
| Community and Primary Health Care                  |                                 |
| Westport Lions Club                                |                                 |
| Kemptville Transportation Services                 | <b>Private Service Provider</b> |
| North Grenville Accessible Transportation          |                                 |
| Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario          |                                 |
| Wubs Transit                                       |                                 |

### ***Brockville Transit***

Brockville Transit provides service throughout the City of Brockville along three fixed routes that serve designated stops. All routes connect at a downtown terminal and provide service to several residential, commercial and employment areas within the City. Service is provided at hourly intervals between 6:45am to 6:15pm on weekdays and between 8:45am to 6:15pm on Saturdays. Service is not provided Sundays and statutory holidays. A six-month pilot project was launched on July 1, 2014 that will see hours of service extended to 11:00pm on weekdays for one of the three bus routes.

The base cash fare for the service is \$2.25, with children under five years of age riding free. Ten-ride passes and unlimited monthly passes are also offered, and provide bulk discounts to users.

The conventional service had an annual ridership of 102,764 passengers, representing a decline of 7.4 percent as compared with 2012.

The City also operates a parallel demand responsive specialized transit service for persons with disabilities in the urban area of Brockville. The specialized service has an annual ridership of 11,498 in 2013, representing a decline of 8.8 percent as compared with 2012.

Funding sources include municipal subsidies (76 percent of costs); passenger fares (21 percent); contributions from senior's facilities (2 percent); and advertising revenue (1 percent).

#### **KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

**Organization Type:** Municipal

**Operating Model:** Fixed Route

**Annual Ridership:** 102,764 (conventional, 2013); 11,498 (specialized transit, 2013)

**Vehicles Owned:** 4 25-passenger accessible buses (conventional) and 2 accessible specialized transit vehicles

**Eligibility:** Conventional - open to all residents; Specialized transit – open to residents with disabilities

**Geographic Focus:** City of Brockville

### ***Canadian Mental Health Association Leeds Grenville***

The Canadian Mental Health Association Leeds Grenville is a community agency that provides health and other social services to persons affected by mental illnesses. It operates demand responsive transportation services for people with mental health issues within the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. The services are available to anybody accessing services at any of the partner organizations within the Counties. Their fleet includes two non-accessible vans, one of which is made directly available to partner agencies to use.

#### **KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

**Organization Type:** Agency

**Operating Model:** Demand Responsive

**Annual Ridership:** 2,000 (volunteers trips)

**Vehicles Owned:** 2 non-accessible minivans

**Eligibility:** Residents of Leeds and Grenville affected by mental health issues who are accessing services in the community

**Geographic Focus:** Leeds and Grenville

Approximately 2,000 trips are made annually with most services occurring Monday to Friday with the primary volunteer-driven van. The second van is lent out to partner agencies for up to seven hours at a time, if scheduled in advanced. Eligible residents can also use the van to access support services within the community, in addition to social events, recreation, and shopping. Trips can be taken both within Leeds and Grenville and to key inter-regional destinations such as Kingston and Ottawa. Passengers are not required to pay a standard fee for trips, but donations are accepted. The majority of the funding for the transportation services comes from the Local Health Integration Network.

### **North Grenville Accessible Transportation**

North Grenville Accessible Transportation Transit is a specialized taxi-equivalent transit service providing services to North Grenville residents that require accessible transportation. It operates demand responsive transportation that transports passengers with disabilities and their attendants (if required) door-to-door. Their fleet is comprised of two accessible mobility buses.

Approximately 2,500 trips are made annually with most services provided daily between 8:00am and 5:00pm. Services must be pre-booked. Most clients use the service to access urban areas like Ottawa, Brockville, and Smiths Falls from their homes in North Grenville. Because it operates a taxi-like service, fares are variable depending on the trip's origin and destination. However, flat-rate monthly passes are available for \$195. Passenger fares recover about 40 percent of costs, while municipal subsidies cover 20 percent, donations cover 10 percent, and organizations such as the United Way cover the remaining 30 percent.

North Grenville Accessible Transportation has indicated that it would like to partner with other services and community agencies to provide an integrated accessible public transportation system in the community.

#### **KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

**Organization Type:** Agency

**Operating Model:** Demand Responsive

**Annual Ridership:** 2,500

**Vehicles Owned:** 2 accessible mobility buses

**Eligibility:** Citizens who require accessible transportation

**Geographic Focus:** Primarily in North Grenville – trips to urban areas (Ottawa, Brockville, etc.) can be coordinated at a fee for service

### ***Kemptville Transportation Services***

Kemptville Transportation Services is an organization that provides fixed-route service geared mainly to citizens of the community of Kemptville, located within the Municipality of North Grenville. It is an OC Transpo Rural Partner, and provides commuter service to the Ottawa/Gatineau area via Routes 542 and 543. The routes are primarily geared to commuters, providing peak hour, peak direction service only. The organization owns three vehicles and employs seven part-time bus drivers who transport an annual ridership of approximately 26,000. Funding for the service is provided by the Ontario Ministry of Social Service and OC Transpo. A fare is also charged to passengers to use the service.

#### **KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

**Organization Type:** Agency  
**Operating Model:** Fixed Route, Flex Route, and Demand Responsive  
**Annual Ridership:** 26,000  
**Vehicles Owned:** 3  
**Eligibility:** Anyone  
**Geographic Focus:** Kemptville to Ottawa/Gatineau

### ***Community and Primary Health Care***

Community and Primary Health Care is a member agency of the United Way that provides demand-responsive volunteer-driven transportation services in Leeds and Grenville. Residents over the age of 18 who have cognitive or physical impairments and/or illnesses are eligible for the service. Transportation is provided door-to-door and is used to bring clients to medical appointments, shopping, and various social activities. The organization has locations in Brockville, Athens, Gananoque, Prescott, and Westport. Drivers are reimbursed for their mileage, but volunteer their time and vehicles to provide the service. Passengers do not pay any costs.

#### **KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

**Organization Type:** Agency  
**Operating Model:** Demand Responsive / Volunteer Drivers  
**Annual Ridership:** Unknown  
**Vehicles Owned:** Volunteers use own vehicles  
**Eligibility:** Persons with disabilities (seniors only); Persons receiving medical treatment or health services at health facilities  
**Geographic Focus:** Brockville, Athens, Gananoque, Seely's Bay, Landsdowne, and Mallorytown



### **Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario**

Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario (STEO) coordinates the planning and delivery of transportation services for the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario and the Upper Canada District School Board across Eastern Ontario, including the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. In total, approximately 35,000 students are transported daily using a fleet of approximately 600 school buses and 200 accessible minivans. Delivery of services is contracted to various private school bus providers. STEO also provides driver training, takes requests for charters and employs route planners for each region. Their role is to schedule trips for the contracted services using a scheduling and dispatch software program.

#### **KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

- Organization Type:** Transportation Consortium representing two school boards
- Operating Model:** Fixed Route and School Bus Service
- Annual Ridership:** 6 million
- Vehicles Owned:** Contract service to 200 accessible minivans; 600 school buses
- Eligibility:** Children
- Geographic Focus:** Eastern Ontario

### **Westport Lions Club**

The Westport Lions Club provides transportation services to citizens in the community of Westport and neighbouring townships. The organization owns one accessible mobility bus, which provides demand-responsive door-to-door service. The transportation service is operated by a team of approximately 10 volunteers. Eligibility is not restricted to a certain demographic, although most users of the service are elderly patients headed to medical appointments. No set fares are charged, however, passengers are asked to donate whatever they can afford. The service is funded 100 percent by donations.

#### **KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

- Organization Type:** Agency
- Operating Model:** Demand Responsive
- Annual Ridership:** Unknown
- Vehicles Owned:** 1 accessible mobility bus
- Eligibility:** Anyone
- Geographic Focus:** Village of Westport; Rideau Township; and Bedford Township

### **Wubs Transit**

Wubs Transit is a private operator that provides a combination of transportation services, including school buses, personalized charters, and accessible transportation. It is a regional transportation service provider that operates throughout the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, North and South Dundas, and the City of Ottawa. Wubs Transit has a fleet of ten vehicles, comprised of two accessible mobility buses (owned by North Grenville Accessible Transportation), one non-accessible transit bus, and seven school buses. It employs nine part-time drivers.

### **VIA Rail**

VIA Rail provides service to Brockville on its Toronto-Ottawa and Toronto-Montréal routes. The Brockville Train Station provides weekday access to six (6) daily trains to/from Toronto, five (5) daily trains to/from Ottawa, and three (3) daily trains to/from Montréal and intermediate points. Service is slightly reduced weekends.

Gananoque also has VIA Rail service, although it is far more limited than the service to/from Brockville. One daily train in each direction stops in Gananoque, providing service to Toronto and Ottawa.

### **Coach Canada**

Megabus is an intercity bus line operated by Coach Canada on the Toronto-Montréal route. Three daily buses in each direction provide service from Brockville to Toronto, Montréal, Kingston, and Cornwall. Megabus does not have a terminal in Brockville, opting instead to pick up and drop off passengers from the Food Basics supermarket, located near the Highway 401/Stewart Boulevard Interchange.

### **Greyhound**

Greyhound provides limited intercity bus service to Brockville, with a route operating four days a week to Ottawa. Service is provided on Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Sunday, and operates from Mac's Milk Convenience Store parking lot on Stewart Boulevard in Brockville.

### **Lanark Transportation Association**

Lanark Transportation Association (LTA) provides demand responsive, wheelchair accessible transportation to eligible residents of Lanark County and the Town of Smiths Falls to travel to and from medical appointments and other specialized services. The LTA also provides transportation for non-emergency, non-ambulance, inter-facility medical transfers between long term care facilities and hospitals. Ridership has grown from 1,460 trips in 2003 to 14,260 trips in 2010. LTA is comprised of twelve paid drivers using agency vehicles and four volunteer drivers using personal vehicles. Fees vary based on the client's destination. Rides must be booked one to two weeks in advance. Funding is achieved through fare recovery, grants and the remainder through provincial and federal gas tax.

### **Key Stakeholders**

Having developed an inventory of existing service providers, the next step in the process is to identify other stakeholders that can potentially contribute to the coordinated framework. This can include agencies that refer clients to or provide funding for a transportation service, municipalities that may operate or provide funding for part of the coordinated framework, employers, local service clubs, charities, citizen groups or others that have an interest in improving mobility within the community.

Each stakeholder group that will be involved in the partnership must have the ability to contribute to the coordinated framework, either in terms of funding, resources, or in-kind services. Within United

Counties of Leeds and Grenville, a number of potential stakeholders were identified through the on-line survey. Only stakeholders that have responded to the survey are shown and as a coordination partnership goes through the development process, more participants will need to be identified.

### Community Support Organizations

There are many community support organization located in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville that serve clients who often do not have access to reliable means of transportation. These organizations, identified as stakeholders, share a common interest in increasing accessibility throughout Leeds and Grenville. They include the following:

- Assault Response & Care Centre;
- Brockville Cycling Advisory Committee;
- Canadian Red Cross;
- Child Development Centre;
- Children's Mental Health of Leeds and Grenville/Making Play Possible;
- CSE Consulting;
- Developmental Services of Leeds and Grenville;
- Employment and Education Centre;
- Every Kid in our Communities;
- KEYS Job Centre;
- Leeds and Grenville Immigration Partnership;
- Ontario Disability Support Program;
- The Salvation Army;
- TriCounty Addiction Services;
- United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Social Services;
- United Way Leeds and Grenville;
- Victim Services of Leeds and Grenville; and
- YMCA of Brockville and Area.

Currently, some of the organizations listed above facilitate transportation, through strategies such as travel subsidies, limited door-to-door volunteer-driven service, and coordination and referrals to other transportation providers. A common theme identified in the survey responses was that on their own, these organizations do not have the available resources to effectively arrange transportation over such a geographically large area. Instead, a coordinated network would provide greater reliability and accessibility for the organizations and their clients alike. Many of the people served by these organizations are elderly, lower income, and experiencing physical or mental issues, factors which decrease their mobility and increase their reliance on others for transportation. Creating a better

transportation system throughout the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville would allow these organizations to focus less on the cost and hassle related to logistics, resulting in better service and access to for their clients.

### Education

As would be expected, the educational facilities within the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville generally serve younger people, a demographic with reduced independent mobility. The catchment area for these facilities is large, and transportation and accessibility can sometimes be present issues. The following educational institutions responded to the survey as stakeholders:

- Brockville Public Library
- Gananoque Secondary School
- Language Express Preschool Speech-Language Program
- Rideau District High School
- Rideau Lakes Public Library
- TR Leger School

Schools in Leeds and Grenville are served by Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario, which operates a fleet of school buses that transports students between their homes and schools. However, the stakeholders have identified that a lack of coordinated transportation poses problems for students enrolled in co-op placements or other special programs, because no transportation is provided to these outside locations. Furthermore, the libraries do not provide any type of transportation assistance, which makes it difficult for some patrons to access them. Any effort to improve transportation to these stakeholders should form part of a larger, integrated network, serving the population of Leeds and Grenville as a whole.

### Healthcare

Healthcare providers and institutions in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville rely on two primary methods of transportation for their patients. Emergency transportation is provided by the county's ambulance service, while local health units do not have any structured transportation systems. Instead, they rely on a combination of referrals to transportation services, travel assistance/subsidies for patients, and sporadic rides provided by volunteers. The interests and transportation goals of this group of stakeholders is similar to those of the community support organizations. The two healthcare providers that answered the survey are:

- Country Roads Community Health
- Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit

### Governments and Municipalities

Municipal governments, along with the county government of Leeds and Grenville, have a vested interest in the development of a comprehensive transit strategy and network that serves their citizens. Increasing accessibility throughout the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville would allow municipal and county services to be reached by all segments of the population. Stakeholders that responded to the survey include:

- City of Brockville;
- Municipality of North Grenville;
- Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal;
- Township of Augusta;
- Township of Rideau Lakes;
- United Counties of Leeds and Grenville; and
- Village of Merrickville-Wolford.

Some of the municipalities surveyed indicated that they would consider funding an integrated transportation network, while others expressed hesitation. Sharing resources and costs may decrease the funding burden for some municipalities, while others may have to contribute more than they currently do. Comments also indicated that school buses could and should be put to better use during non-peak hours, as they provide significant transportation capacity but sit unused most of the day.

### Summary

The on-line questionnaire and follow-up stakeholder workshop revealed a number of existing transportation services in United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and opportunities to improve service. These are assessed in Step 3 below.

## STEP 3 Identify Service Demand and Gaps/Implementation Issues and Opportunities

The purpose of Step 3 is to expand on the data gathering completed in Step 2 to determine service demands and gaps as well as implementation issues and opportunities. This will help determine the type of coordination model that should be implemented or whether coordination is a feasible solution. In certain cases, the problem is a resource issue which is better solved through additional funding rather than coordination.

## Service Demand and Gaps

A number of gaps in service were identified as part of the consultation process. These were prioritized by the consulting team based on interviews with stakeholders and through the survey results. This should be confirmed by the partnership through a more detailed review of travel patterns and the number of trips not accommodated.

- 1. Capacity Issues:** Previous studies have indicated that limited or unavailable transportation options are an issue that imposes economic, social and medical hardship on many citizens in the United Counties. While there are a number of transportation providers in place, there are many needs that are not being accommodated. Resources are being tied up for long periods of time delivering medical trips outside of the County. These long distance trips can tie up a vehicle for half of the day and often an entire day; limiting the ability to accommodate additional discretionary trips such as trips to access groceries, banking, etc.
- 2. Affordability:** A number of existing transportation providers charge a per km rate for long-distance trips. Given the large geography of Leeds & Grenville, the cost to receive service can be unaffordable for a number of residents, particularly youth and seniors. The issue of affordability was identified as a key mobility gap, particularly residents in rural areas far removed from major urban centres.
- 3. Geographic Availability:** A number of low income residents live in small rural areas throughout the County due to low housing costs. However, these communities don't have all of the necessary services. Residents without a car have difficulty accessing the services they need for everyday living. These areas also have limited transportation options due to the low density nature of land use.
- 4. Ease of Understanding:** There are a number of transportation services available with various eligibility criteria. As a result, a number of residents are unaware of their eligibility and how to access available transportation services or the potential for subsidies through various Ministries or non-governmental organizations.

## Implementation Issues and Opportunities

A number of implementation issues and opportunities were also identified as part of the consultation process. These are important to understand as they have a direct influence on the type of coordination model selected. These include:

### Implementation Issues

- 1. Previous Unsuccessful Attempt at Coordination:** In 2009, a number of organizations led by Every Kid in Our Communities implemented a pilot program to coordinate transportation within the United Counties. There were two different operating models that were used, including contracting the service to Lanark Transportation Association and using volunteers. While the pilot was successful in improving transportation services, it was ultimately cancelled in 2011 due

to a lack of sustainable funding. While this experience presents an opportunity, it may also be an implementation issue as certain organizations or decision makers may not want to go through the process again. Clear communication must be in place to articulate how lessons learned will be used to ensure the second attempt at coordinated transportation will be successful.

- 2. Numerous Potential Transportation Partners and Partner Agencies:** There are a number of transportation providers and agencies that provide or refer residents to transportation services within the region. Approximately 40 agencies formed part of the initial transportation pilot. This can lead to uncertainty of roles and responsibilities, particularly if there is not strong leadership. This will need to be managed by the working group with the objective of keeping things simple at the beginning and clearly communicating roles and responsibilities to each partner.
- 3. Dispersed Nature of Travel Demand:** One of the challenges in providing cost effective transportation services in Leeds and Grenville is that travel patterns are very dispersed, which makes it difficult to concentrate services on a corridor, increase vehicle occupancy and operate a fixed corridor route. Residents in North Leeds and Grenville have a strong attraction to Smith Falls and Ottawa. In the southwest, there is a strong attraction to Brockville and Kingston and in the southeast, there is a strong attraction to Brockville and Ottawa. This dispersed nature of travel makes it difficult to operate financial sustainable transportation services.
- 4. Resources/Driver Availability:** There are not enough vehicles or drivers to meet the current demand. Some existing services have vehicles that are under-utilized due to limited driver availability. Additional drivers/vehicles are needed in order to meet the current demand; however, funding is also an issue to pay for these additional resources. Volunteer demand responsive services have difficulty recruiting volunteer drivers in certain areas of the County. Private providers have vehicles that are under-utilized.

### Opportunities

- 1. Past Experience with Coordination:** As mentioned above, Every Kid in Our Community led a coordinated transportation pilot program for over two years. While the pilot was ultimately discontinued due to a lack of sustainable transportation funding, the experience and lessons learned from this initial partnership will be valuable in developing a coordinated transportation framework. There is also a culture of partnerships between many of the agencies that previously participated in the pilot that continues today. Much of the upfront work identified in Steps 1 through 3 is already complete and should require minimal effort to update.
- 2. Existing Scheduling Software Program:** Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario has an existing scheduling software program in place and a desire to be part of the solution. The group currently coordinates the planning and delivery of transportation services for school boards across Eastern Ontario, including the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. In total, approximately 35,000 students are transported daily using a fleet of approximately 600 school buses and 200 accessible minivans. This is done through a scheduling and dispatch software

program that is used to cost effectively deliver services between the different providers. This program and the staff that operate it can be adapted for use by the partnership to deliver a coordinated transportation solution. The opportunity to use this expertise and resource should be assessed.

3. **LHIN Support for Integrated Service Delivery:** The South East LHIN works closely with a number of existing agencies to help improve transportation issues for seniors and persons with disabilities. The advantage of this LHIN is a willingness to partner with municipalities to fund coordinated transportation that not only meets the needs of seniors and persons with disabilities, but also all members of the community. Examples include funding for coordinated transportation projects in Bancroft (Trout) and north-south Frontenac. Since the LHINs focus is still on healthcare, there is a need to ensure the aging at home needs continue to be met with their portion of funding, however, there is a recognition that more can be accomplished by pooling funding into one coordinated system instead of having separate systems in a municipality.
4. **Gas Tax Funding:** None of the municipalities within the two Counties receive provincial gas tax funding. The United Counties could benefit from a significant increase in revenue towards transit services if they were responsible for (directly or through agreement with another transportation provider in the partnership) the delivery of public transit or community transportation services. This revenue could be used to expand services to meet the various gaps in the community.

## STEP 4

### Assess Different Levels of Coordination

The review of existing transportation services within the United Counties of Leeds & Grenville revealed a desire among several organizations to improve rural transportation. There is a strong culture of working together among the various agencies and past experience with coordinated transportation that the partnership can draw on. There are also numerous transportation providers in place with paid drivers that operate a fleet of vans and buses as well as a pool of volunteers using their own vehicles.

The South East LHIN seems supportive of establishing coordinated transportation frameworks if it improves transportation services for the clients and meets their overall aging at home mandate. Finally, no existing transportation service in the United Counties is benefitting from provincial gas tax funding. There is the opportunity to potentially access this funding when developing a coordination model.

The four coordination models were assessed to determine their applicability within the United Counties of Leeds & Grenville. The lead partner for Models 1 through 3 is not known at this point and would need to be confirmed by the Transportation Coordination Working Group.



**Model 1: Centralized Control**

This model represents the highest degree of coordination and would involve a lead partner taking over all aspects of transportation on behalf of the partnership. Existing transportation service providers such as the North Grenville Transportation, Westport Lions Club, Kemptville Transportation Services would need to transfer ownership of their vehicles, operating resources and funding earmarked to transportation services to the lead partner.

The benefit of this model is that it provides the highest degree of coordination as the entire fleet would be available and decisions would be made that maximize the efficiency of the trip. This model also allows the various agencies to focus their efforts on the key elements of their mandates which are not transportation related.

Based on the stakeholder consultation completed, no organization was identified as having the resources or desire to take on this primary transportation role.

The County does not own any vehicles and has no experience with transportation operations. There are also too many agencies each with different mandates. There are a number of smaller agencies that operate at a grass roots level and do not appear to be willing to give up control of their operations and lose sight of their specific mandate. Creating a Central Coordination Model would impact these reporting structures and require too many stakeholders at the table.



For these reasons, this model is not recommended.

**Model 2: Brokerage – Central Coordination**

In this model, a lead organization is responsible for the planning, scheduling and dispatch of transportation services. Delivery of trips continues to be completed by each of the partner organizations.

The benefit of this model for Leeds and Grenville is that it follows a similar structure as the 2009 pilot project led by Every Kid in Our Communities. While the pilot was cancelled, the reason was due to a lack of sustainable funding and not due to the overall structure of the partnership. There are a number of transportation providers and stakeholders in Leeds and Grenville, and each have a strong desire to maintain a grass roots approach to transportation service delivery.

This model allows this to occur.

The model also maximizes the potential for coordination without requiring the County or the lead partner to get into the business of vehicle purchases and hiring drivers. The role of the lead partner, instead, would be as a coordinating body for all trips. It also allows various different mandates to be retained. This is a role that was completed by Every Kid in Our Communities in the past. The model also allows the partnership to better utilize some of the existing resources in place within the community, such as the Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario’s existing scheduling and dispatch software program to coordinate trips.

For these reasons, it is recommended that this model be carried over by the coordination working group for further review.

**Model 3: Brokerage – Confirmation-Based Coordination**

This model is similar to Model 2. The big difference is that in this model the lead partner must confirm the booking of any coordinated trips with the partner agency providing the service before it is confirmed. The advantages and disadvantages are similar to the Model 2. The difference is the extra step required to book a trip and that the opportunity for coordination is less than in the Brokerage –Central Coordination Model.

This may be an appropriate model to explore for Leeds and Grenville, particularly as trust is built during the partnership. For these reasons, it is recommended that this model be carried over for further review.



**Model 4: Voluntary Cooperation**



This model is the first step toward greater coordination and is already occurring in Leeds and Grenville. A number of agencies are already coordinating and sharing best practices. As part of the previous transportation pilot program, a 1-800 number was set up to act as a resource for residents to determine transportation options available to them. This was successful in informing residents about how and where to access transportation services, but it does not increase the availability of transportation services as much as Models 2 and 3 would.

The other disadvantage of this model is that there is a small role for Leeds and Grenville or any of the local municipalities. The main advantage of having the County as the lead is the potential to access provincial gas tax funds. This will only occur if the County is responsible for the partnership.

Adopting this model would not lead to a noticeable improvement in efficiencies and level of service to customers. For this reason, this model is not recommended.

## STEP 5

### Identify the Building Blocks of the Preferred Coordination Models

In Step 4, two of the four coordination models were considered for further review: Model 2: Brokerage Model - Central Coordination and Model 3: Brokerage Model – Confirmation-Based Coordination.

With these models in mind, each of the building blocks that make up a coordinated transportation framework will need to be assessed by the partnership working group. This includes service delivery, scheduling and dispatch, vehicle maintenance, etc. The application of each of these building blocks to the preferred Leeds and Grenville model is documented below.

#### Service Planning

Under both models, the lead partner would be responsible for service planning. The lead role for this function would need to be taken on by a member of the partnership that has some expertise in this role and the ability to see the broader picture. The partnership may also choose to bring in outside 'objective' expertise to assist (particularly during the start-up).

Key activities that would form part of this function include:

5. Working with some of the existing fixed route transportation providers (e.g. Wubs Transportations) to establish scheduled fixed route services between urban centres within and adjacent to the County.
6. Establishing a coordination plan that would use the various demand responsive services as feeders for the scheduled fixed routes.
7. Working with Brockville Transit to establish potential for service integration between the Leeds and Grenville transportation services and Brockville Transit services. Similar agreements as made with OC Transpo for its Rural Transportation Services should be explored.
8. Working with Lanark Transportation Association to establish potential integration with this service provider for the northern municipalities.

Coordinated service planning is required under the Brokerage - Central Coordination Model and optional under the Brokerage – Confirmation-Based Model, however, it is still recommended.

The function is fairly easy to implement with the assistance of outside expertise or experience within the partnership. Step 6 below provides some preliminary recommendations of options that the partnership group should begin to explore.

Improving connectivity between the different types of services identified above will also increase the effectiveness and efficiency of all services and provide additional capacity to meet the needs of more residents. There may be an initial cost to hire outside expertise to develop a service plan.

### Customer Service / Intake Process / Scheduling and Dispatch

These three functions are assessed together because they all involve the partnership setting up a central office that will be the main interface point for customers requesting trips or getting information about the service.

This would be the responsibility of the lead partner. In choosing a lead partner, it is important to have someone with experience in coordinating or operating transportation services. Student Transportation Services of Eastern Ontario currently employs a number of Route Planners that schedule service using a scheduling and dispatch software program. This includes service for both conventional school buses and accessible buses for students with disabilities. The potential to capitalize on this resource should be explored by the partnership. It would likely involve hiring new customer service staff and training them on the use of the scheduling software package. By cross training all staff, back-up would also be available, particularly when staff are sick or on vacation. A central phone number would need to be established that is separate from the Student Transportation Services of Eastern Ontario number to avoid any brand confusion from residents.

There are currently over 40,000 rural transportation trips being delivered annually in Leeds and Grenville, not including Brockville Transit and school bus trips. The majority of trips are focused in North Grenville for either workers destined to Ottawa or seniors and persons with disabilities for medical trips. Demand for trips is likely two times greater than what is being supplied today and some markets are not served at all.

At this level of annual ridership a centralized scheduling software program would be beneficial to enhance the number of shared trips. The use of this software can increase the efficiency of service delivered by as much as 15 percent.

The scheduling program would also be useful for coordinating trips between demand responsive services and any new scheduled fixed route corridor service that may be implemented. This helps minimize resource requirements for long-distance trips within the United Counties. The partnership would need to assess the cost, benefit and its contribution towards the scheduling software program licensing fee currently paid for by Student Transportation Services of Eastern Ontario before going down this route.

Centralized customer service is a logical extension of the centralized reservation/dispatch office. Initial calls regarding passenger inquiries, complaints or compliments should be handled by the central office, and potentially redirected to one of the partner agencies, depending on the extent of the issue.

For the intake process, this will require more investigation between the partners involved in the coordinated framework. The Student Transportation Services of Eastern Ontario may not be the most appropriate partner organization to take on this function since most intake requirements are geared towards seniors and persons with disabilities. At this point, it is recommended that client intake still be conducted by each partner agency. However, information about all transportation programs should be made available on the central website and to customer service staff to inform residents about the options available to them. If calls are received regarding client registration at the central reservation/dispatch office, they could be directed to the right agency partner by asking two to three clarifying questions to determine potential eligibility.

Given the volume of calls that currently take place, it is recommended that the central dispatch office be staffed with 3-4 reservationists / dispatchers and customer service staff (Transportation Coordinators). Under the Brokerage Model, some of the existing transportation coordinators could be trained to perform these roles. This would lead to a reduction in the number of existing staff required to perform this function. Under the Confirmation Based Brokerage Model (Model 3), there is less of a savings in staff time since each partner agency providing service would likely be involved in transportation coordination.

### Marketing / Awareness

It is recommended that a central brand be developed for the partnership. Based on initial review, there is already a strong awareness of transportation services in certain parts of the region such as Westport and North Grenville. However, if the partnership is going to address some of the needs in other parts of the county, particularly for youth and adults, a central brand and awareness campaign should be developed.

To maintain a local connection, the support provided by each partner in the organization should be identified in marketing and communications material. This is especially important in the initial stages of the partnership.

Some initial funding would need to be put in place to develop a brand and communication strategy. Outside marketing and branding expertise may be sought.

### Eligibility Criteria

The partnership will need to review the eligibility criteria of all participating agencies. Where the eligibility criteria are similar, efforts should be made to standardize. This increases the ability to coordinate trips between differ partners in the network.

### **Policies and Procedures / Passenger Fares**

The policies and procedures of each of the partners will need to be reviewed once they have confirmed their participation in the partnership.

The ability to standardize passenger fares and kilometre rates will also help enhance the ease in which coordination takes place.

### **Vehicle Purchase, Vehicle Maintenance, Driver Training**

Based on the initial review, there are approximately seven accessible buses, seven school buses and two to three vans available to provide service throughout the County. This does not include service provided by Brockville Transit which owns another seven accessible vehicles. Currently, there is no consistency in the type of vehicle. Private carriers and school bus operators that would be contracted to operate fixed route services own and maintain their own vehicles.

Unless there is a significant expansion in the number of vehicles, there is no real benefit to coordinating vehicle purchases. However, vehicle specifications should be reviewed and agreed to by the partnership to ensure all future vehicles are consistent in their ability to accommodate passengers with mobility devices.

There is some value in developing a standard driver training program that could be used for paid drivers and volunteers. The Student Transportation Services of Eastern Ontario already has a driver training program in place for school bus drivers and this may be a good place to start. This would ensure that all drivers have the same safety and customer service training.

### **Volunteer Recruitment and Training**

At the initial stages of the partnership, coordination of volunteer recruitment may be a challenge, particularly if the partnership brand is no longer associated with a local agency. This function should be addressed in later years of the partnership.

## **STEP 6** Select a Preferred Coordination Model

Within Leeds and Grenville, it is recommended that either Brokerage Model (Central Coordination or Confirmation Based) be explored. The partnership would be between the County, participating local municipalities, existing transportation providers, social service agencies that refer clients to transportation services, the Student Transportation Services of Eastern Ontario and employers. Every Kid in Our Communities should be a key player in the partnership given its past experience with the

transportation pilot project. Private sector bus and school bus operators would be used to enhance corridor or fixed route service, but would not form part of the partnership.

To be successful, it is recommended that Every Kid in Our Communities work with the County to act as a coordinating body for the partnership group. In this role, the County would rely on the expertise of the group in service planning and delivery, but would be accountable to the service. With some funding contribution, it would allow the County to approach the province to receive provincial gas tax funding. This funding must flow through a municipality.

A lead partner would also need to be selected to schedule and dispatch trips, handle customer service requests and monitor the service. This may be the Student Transportation Services of Eastern Ontario given their existing experience and access to a robust scheduling and dispatch software program. Other partner agencies would contribute through funding, in-kind use of vehicles, resources and/or expertise. The lead partner would not take ownership of any of the vehicles.

Given the service needs and gaps identified in Step 4, it is recommended that two working groups be formed to address immediate coordination opportunities as well as the need for improved services for students and employees seeking to access major employers in the County.

Based on the above review, the following opportunities should be explored by each of these working groups to improve transportation services in Leeds and Grenville:

### Coordination Opportunities

Within the coordinated framework, one working group of existing service providers could be set up to assess the opportunity to improve the demand responsive services already in place. This working group would work from the bottom-up to build on existing coordination and keep the momentum going. There are some additional aspects of coordination that could be easily implemented within these existing services. These include:

1. **Pursue Sustainable Funding to Grow:** One of the first tasks of the group is to identify additional funding sources to be able to expand transportation services. A lack of sustainable funding was one of the key reasons for the cancellation of the previous transportation pilot and access to sustainable funding is imperative to accommodate some up-front coordination costs and improve overall services within the framework.

It is recommended that the group approach the County and/or any of the local municipalities to discuss the potential to access provincial gas tax funding. To receive gas tax funding, the County or one of the local municipalities would need to formally support and contribute financially to public transportation services. The amount contributed would in part influence how much they

receive (see **Chapter 5**). The funds received would flow through the lead municipality and be directed at expanding existing services.

In addition to gas tax funding, other sources of funding should be sought. A small transportation levy per household and business (e.g. \$10 to \$15 annually) would significantly increase the level of investment to expand transportation services. This has been successfully done in other municipalities, including the County of North Hastings to support the TROUT service.

The South East LHIN should also be approached to ensure that funding provided to existing service providers is not jeopardized if it begins to accept other types of riders (e.g. adults and youth) as part of the coordinated partnership. The South East LHIN has shown a previous willingness to develop coordinated transportation strategy where the mandate moves beyond seniors and persons with disabilities, so long as clear metrics are established to ensure that the portion of funding provided by the LHIN continues to serve their mandate.

- 2. Assess the use of a Centralized Scheduling Software:** Investigate the use of the existing scheduling software program owned by the Student Transportation Services of Eastern Ontario. The purpose of a scheduling software program can be fairly expensive and requires significant hours of set-up and training. Based on initial discussions, the Student Transportation Services of Eastern Ontario has a willingness to explore a potential partnership to improve transportation services within Leeds and Grenville. The organization has the staff with the expertise to use the software and has already paid the fee to purchase the software. The working group would need to determine the cost of setting up and using the software, including initial set-up fees, annual licensing fees and annual salary for transportation coordinators. If this arrangement is not favourable, the partnership should also explore purchasing a stand-alone scheduling software program.
- 3. Partnership with Adjacent Transit Providers:** It is also recommended that a partnership with Brockville Transit and Lanark Transportation Association be investigated. This would allow for seamless passenger transfers and potentially service schedule coordination. This would include coordination of any fixed route corridor services with Brockville Transit to ensure seamless transfers and fare integration. The ability to coordinate with Lanark Transportation Association for trips in North Leeds and Grenville should also be explored, particularly with cross boundary trips.

### Potential New Services

A second working group should be created to assess new funding opportunities, the feasibility of developing more cost effective fixed route service to the major urban centres as well as purpose specific shuttle services for residents looking to access various services throughout the county. This group would take a top-down approach to service planning with a goal of improving transportation services for



seniors, youth and adults looking to access employment areas. Some potential improvements for this group to explore include:

1. **Implement Corridor Services:** Explore the opportunity to develop a fixed route service between major urban centres within and outside of Leeds and Grenville. Based on an initial review of population centres and major travel demands, the major transportation demand appears to be along the Highway 401 and 412 corridor connecting Kingston, Gananoque, Brockville, Prescott, Kemptville and Ottawa. This is illustrated in **Figure 11** below.

**Figure 11 - Potential Corridor Service in Leeds and Grenville**



Successful corridor services already exist between North Grenville (Kemptville) and Ottawa with fare integration between the rural service and OC Transpo. The objective would be to identify the potential to expand on this service to the other major destinations within Leeds and Grenville.

The distance between Gananoque and Brockville is approximately 50 km and the distance between Brockville and Kemptville is approximately 60 km. If a community agency charged a

rate of \$0.45 cents per kilometre for demand responsive volunteer service, the cost of a one-way trip would be \$22.5 and \$27.0 respectively.<sup>17</sup>

Under a fixed route service, the travel time between Gananoque and Kemptville with 4-5 stops in urban centres is between approximately 60 to 90 minutes. If an hourly operating rate of \$70.00 were charged to provide the service and a passenger fare of \$10.00 to \$15.00 were charged (depending on the length of the trip completed), the service would require 5 to 10 passengers per hour to break even (depending on the passenger fares, travel time and the destinations of each passenger).

The role of the working group would be to assess the potential travel demand along this corridor, establish a service schedule based on peak travel demand and establish a passenger fare.

For the corridor service to be successful, a coordination strategy with various demand responsive service and local fixed route services (e.g. Brockville Transit and North Grenville Accessible Transportation) would need to be developed to feed into the corridor service. Where there is an existing fixed route service in place such as Brockville, a designated transfer point would be established to feed into the corridor service. In communities with no existing local transit services (e.g. Front of Yonge), a demand responsive service would take a resident to the closest and most convenient transfer point on the corridor service to complete their trip. Key transfer points along the corridor could include Gananoque, Lansdowne, Brockville, Prescott, Spencerville and Kemptville. In some of these smaller communities (e.g. Prescott), the corridor service could provide a flex route pick-up and drop-off service for passengers that reserve the trip at least 24 hours in advance. For larger communities, demand responsive services, local transit or taxis would be used to complete the passenger trip.

Passenger profiles would need to be reviewed, particularly for frail seniors and persons with disabilities to identify who could safely use the corridor service. Some travel training for this market group would need to be applied.

The schedule for the corridor service could change based on demand. Where there is insufficient demand, the trip could still be accommodated using a demand responsive or volunteer service.

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<sup>17</sup> Potential fare parity issues under the AODA legislation should be reviewed before proceeding with this option.

2. **Charter Services:** Opportunities to partner with various retailers, adult day centres, or other programs should also be explored by the working group. A well-advertised program that provides a bus service to major destinations on certain days of the week could be explored. For example, a Tuesday grocery store run in Rideau Lakes or a Wednesday shopping run to the 1000 Islands Mall or a monthly run sponsored by a local dentist could be established. This is a very effective transportation demand management tool to group passenger trips headed to the same destination. It also frees up existing demand responsive services to perform other priority medical trips where it is difficult to group passengers together.

For this strategy to be successful, the working group would need to work collaboratively to identify travel patterns and potential needs within the community. The focus should be on discretionary trips that people are not restricted to by an appointment. This allows residents to adjust their schedules and travel on a set date and time. A reduced passenger fare could be charged for these runs as multiple passengers traveling in the same vehicle would increase the cost effectiveness of the service. The opportunity to receive sponsorship from retailers or services that the charter is focused on should also be sought.<sup>18</sup>

3. **Use of Taxis:** The working group should explore the number of local trips conducted within some of the larger urban areas such as Kemptville and explore the potential to have the service delivered by the taxi industry. There may be the ability to negotiate a preferred flat rate for in-town trips based on the volume of trips that are anticipated. For eligible passengers, they would pay a flat fee and the partnership would subsidize the remaining part of the fare. This approach is successfully used in Stratford, where eligible passengers pay a flat fare of \$5.50 and the Community Care Agency pays the difference between the passenger fare and the preferred taxi rate fare of \$7.00. In this situation, the use of taxis is more cost effective than providing the service using agency owned vehicles and it allows those vehicles to be better utilized for long-distance trips.

### Next Steps

For the coordination model to be successful, leadership is required. It is suggested that a working group be formed to further develop immediate opportunities (within their span of control) in the areas outlined above.

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<sup>18</sup> Potential fare parity issues under the AODA legislation should be reviewed before proceeding with this option.

It is recognized that there are gaps and travel markets not being addressed by the existing services and that the expansion of the fixed route service may provide a strong core service to address these deficiencies. This expansion may require new funding (e.g. gas tax support) and new partnerships (e.g. scheduling software program). Hence a planning-oriented working group should be formed to assess and address these opportunities and challenges.