



Committee Report

To: Warden Chris Peabody
Members of the Information Technology Services Committee

From: Michael Kirkpatrick
Director of Information Technology Services

Date: September 7, 2023

Re: Ride Sharing Initiative

Staff Recommendation:

That the County enter a ride-sharing system partnership with Bruce Power through contract for services with the RideShark corporation. Year 1 costs of \$38,000 paid by Bruce Power, year 2 and onward operating costs of \$16,000 funded at 50% by each party and that this be represented in the Transportation and Environmental Services budget effective September 2024 forward.

Background:

RideShark presents a range of potential benefits for Bruce County by offering innovative solutions to common transportation challenges. One of the primary advantages of car-pooling is the ability to reduce traffic congestion. By encouraging ride-sharing and carpooling, the County can significantly decrease the number of single-occupancy vehicles on the road, leading to smoother traffic flow and reduced delays. This reduction in traffic congestion aligns with goals of improving overall transportation efficiency and enhancing the quality of life for residents.

Car-pooling contributes to environmental sustainability. By promoting shared transportation, the platform helps to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality. This environmental benefit is particularly important for the County to meet climate change and sustainability targets. Bruce County's emphasis on reducing the carbon footprint aligns with broader efforts to create greener and more eco-friendly communities. This partnership supports Bruce Power's Net Zero initiative by encouraging carpooling options for employees, by offering a transportation option that replaces the underutilized Bruce Power employee bussing service.

Implementing a ride share system, such as RideShark aligns with early feedback from the consultants, ARCADIS IBI Group, on the County's Transit Demand and Feasibility Study that is currently being undertaken. In the Phase 2 stakeholder and municipal engagement sessions, the consultant identified that a rideshare program could assist with meeting four of the seven transportation needs that have been identified in Phase 1 of the study. It is anticipated that establishing a ride share program will be a key recommendation of the study when it comes forward to County Council later this Fall.

The system generates valuable data that can aid the County in making informed decisions about transportation planning. Insights into travel patterns, trip durations, and popular routes can inform infrastructure improvements and should it be explored, optimize public transportation offerings. The data-driven approach can provide helpful information that could further the work of the Transit Need and Feasibility study to help inform future transit options within the County, such as on-demand transit solutions. The data from this system can also help ensure an effective allocation of resources across the County.

Managed car-pooling brings a variety of advantages to the County. From reducing traffic congestion and carbon emissions to providing resident and visitor cost-effective options and enhancing transportation accessibility, the platform addresses multiple aspects of modern transportation challenges. By leveraging data and fostering collaboration, Bruce County can utilize RideShark as a tool to create more efficient, sustainable, and accessible transportation systems.

An 8-week implementation which includes:

- Branded iOS and Android apps
- Website Development
- Core Ride Matching Module
- Commuter Tracking Module
 - Cost and emission calculation
- Points of Interest Module
- Incentive Management Module
 - Incentivize sustainable behaviour change
- Communications and media launch by Bruce County and Bruce Power

Optional Modules not in current scope

- Vanpool Route and Roster Management
- Emergency Ride Home Module

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

\$8,000 + HST financial impact to Transportation and Environmental Services operating budget in 2024 and onward.

No staffing considerations

Interdepartmental Consultation:

Collaboration on feasibility, alignment and implementation conducted between Transportation and Environmental Services, Planning and Economic Development and Information Technology Services.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

This initiative helps further several goals and actions outlined in the Bruce County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

Goal 2: Enhance and Grow Partnerships

Objective: Work collaboratively between departments and with our partners on integration and continuum of excellent services.

Action: Develop and implement policies or initiatives that promote the public and partner engagement in the development and delivery of services.

Goal 3: Strengthen County's use of Technology and Innovative Initiatives

Objective: Provide more integrated services and seamless technology that enhances the customer experience.

Action: Pilot innovative virtual services to complement and enhance current service delivery options.

Goal 4: Promote Responsible Growth

Objective: Improve transportation options and connectivity in Bruce County

Action: Develop and implement a transportation demand management program to promote carpooling, active transportation, and telecommuting by 2026.

Report Author:

Michael Kirkpatrick - Director of Information Technology Services

Claire Dodds - Director of Planning and Economic Development

Departmental Approval:

Approved for Submission:

Derrick Thomson

Chief Administrative Officer