



Bruce, Dufferin, Grey, Wellington Regional Transit Review

Council Engagement - Preliminary Options and Next Steps
Presentation to Bruce County Council
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Dennis Kar, MUP, RPP
Partner, Dillon Consulting Limited
dkar@dillon.ca



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Study Purpose

Study Purpose: To design and assess the feasibility of a unified transit network across Bruce, Dufferin, Grey and Wellington Counties

Key Partners: Bruce, Dufferin, Grey and Wellington Counties, together with Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit (SMART)

Phase 2 Operating Funding: Funding provided through OTIF to operate the recommended unified network for up to four years (average 50% contribution)

Why Unify Transit?



- Creates a seamless passenger experience, including:
 - Trip booking and planning
 - Minimizing transfers
 - Eligibility for specialized transit
 - Fares
- Identify efficiencies through collaboration and taking advantage of unallocated resources
- Creates a unified voice for funding from senior levels of government

Study Schedule



Goal of this Session

No decisions are being requested. Goal of the session is to receive feedback on:

1. Preliminary transit options

- Do the conceptual inter-community corridors make sense?
- Do you see SMART and other on-demand providers as a potential solution?
- Do you support partnerships with private-sector carriers?

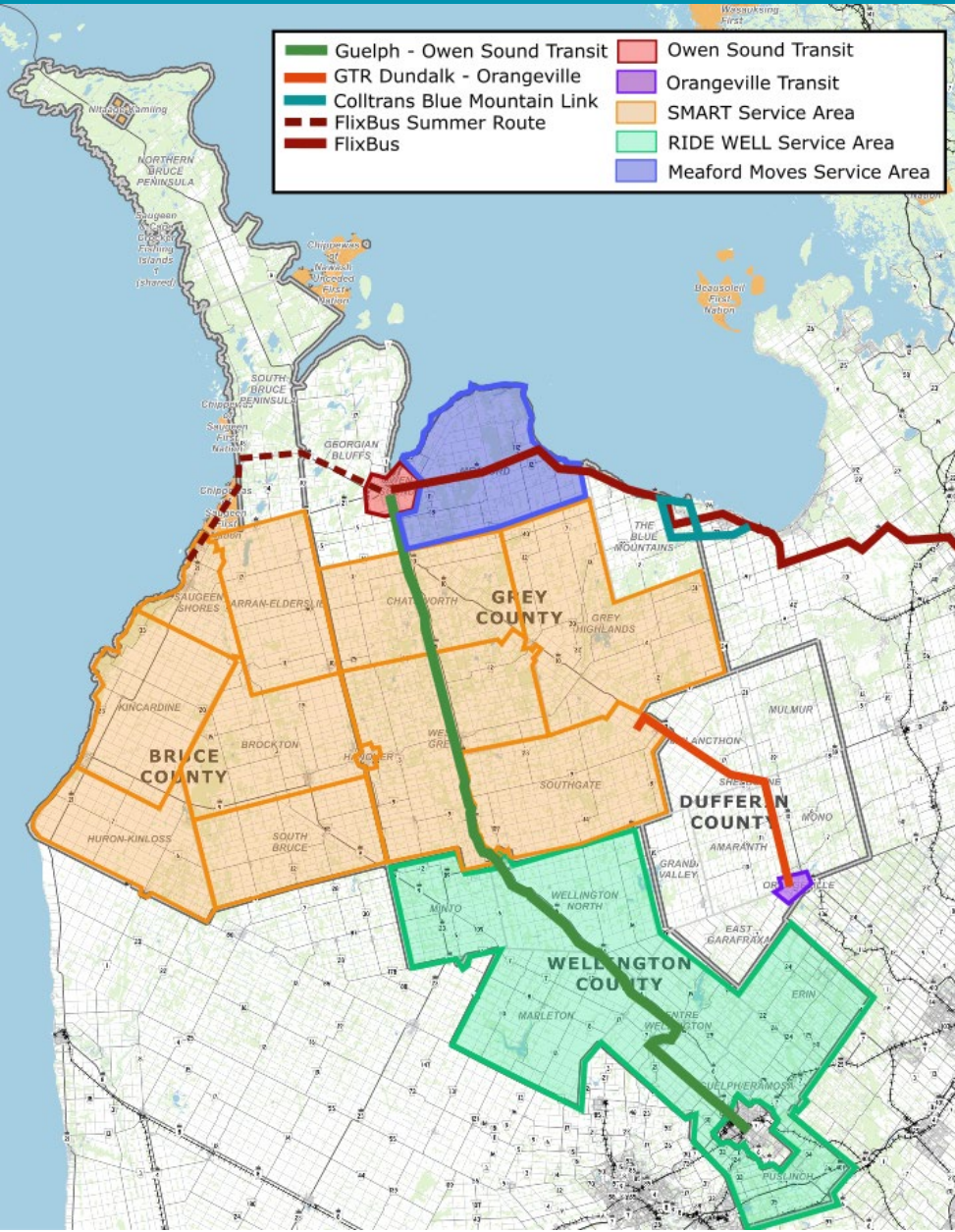
2. Priorities to focus on if funding is limited

- Improve level of service on high demand corridors
- Focus on equitable access across the County, including low ridership areas

3. Governance models identified and the attributes we will use to assess each

4. Key measures of success that should be in place to mitigate risk and eventual loss of funding

Existing Mobility Options Are Limited



- **Local Transit** - Owen Sound, The Blue Mountains and Orangeville
- **Inter-community service** - Service is limited
 - GOST (between Owen Sound, Mount Forest, Fergus / Elora and Guelph)
 - Grey Transit Route (between Dundalk, Shelburne and Orangeville)
- **On-Demand** - Wellington County provides a County-wide on-demand service, but it can be difficult to book rides due to a limited number of vehicles
- **Specialized Transit** - Meaford Moves, Saugeen Mobility And Regional Transit and several community care agencies provide community transportation for persons with disabilities; not used for everyday travel
- **Carpooling** - Bruce County coordinates SMART Commute program, but not always reliable
- Several **private carriers** provide inter-community service to the GTA, but not suitable for everyday use

Potential Gaps – Grey County

- **Local Transit:**

- No service outside of Owen Sound and The Blue Mountains

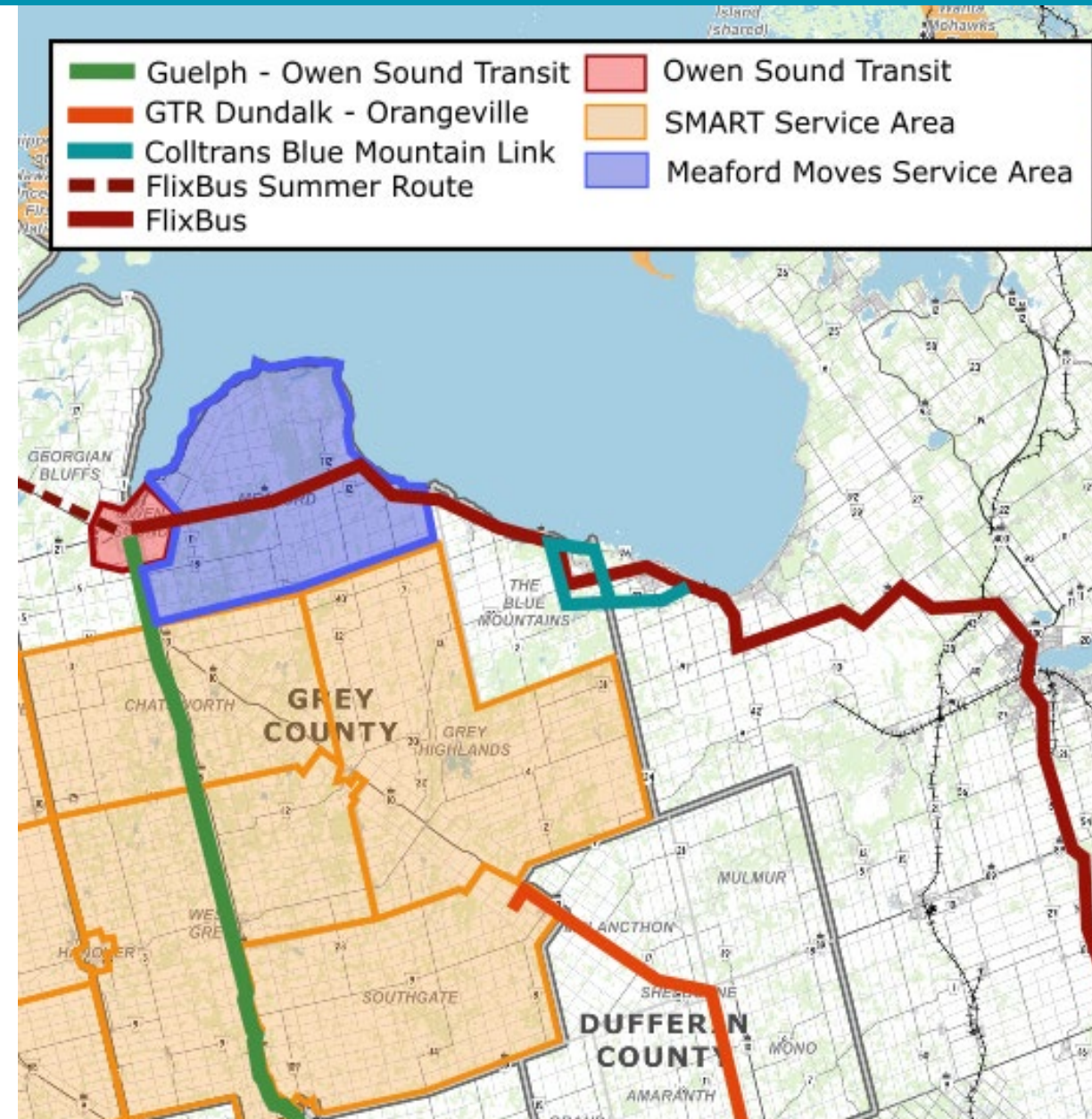
- **The "Corridor" Effect:**

- Inter-community transit limited to major highways (Hwy 6 and 26), leaving communities just a few kilometres off the main road completely unserved
- Inter-City Carriers: FlixBus provides service between The Blue Mountains and Owen Sound, but limited schedule

- **Specialized Transit (persons with disabilities)**

- Provided within Owen Sound, Meaford and The Blue Mountains
- SMART does not service Owen Sound, The Blue Mountains, Meaford and Georgian Bluffs
- HCSS of Grey Bruce focuses primarily on medical and adult day program rides and is facing capacity issues to deliver these and other trip requests (e.g. social trips)

Bruce, Dufferin, Grey, Wellington Unified Transit Study – Preliminary Options



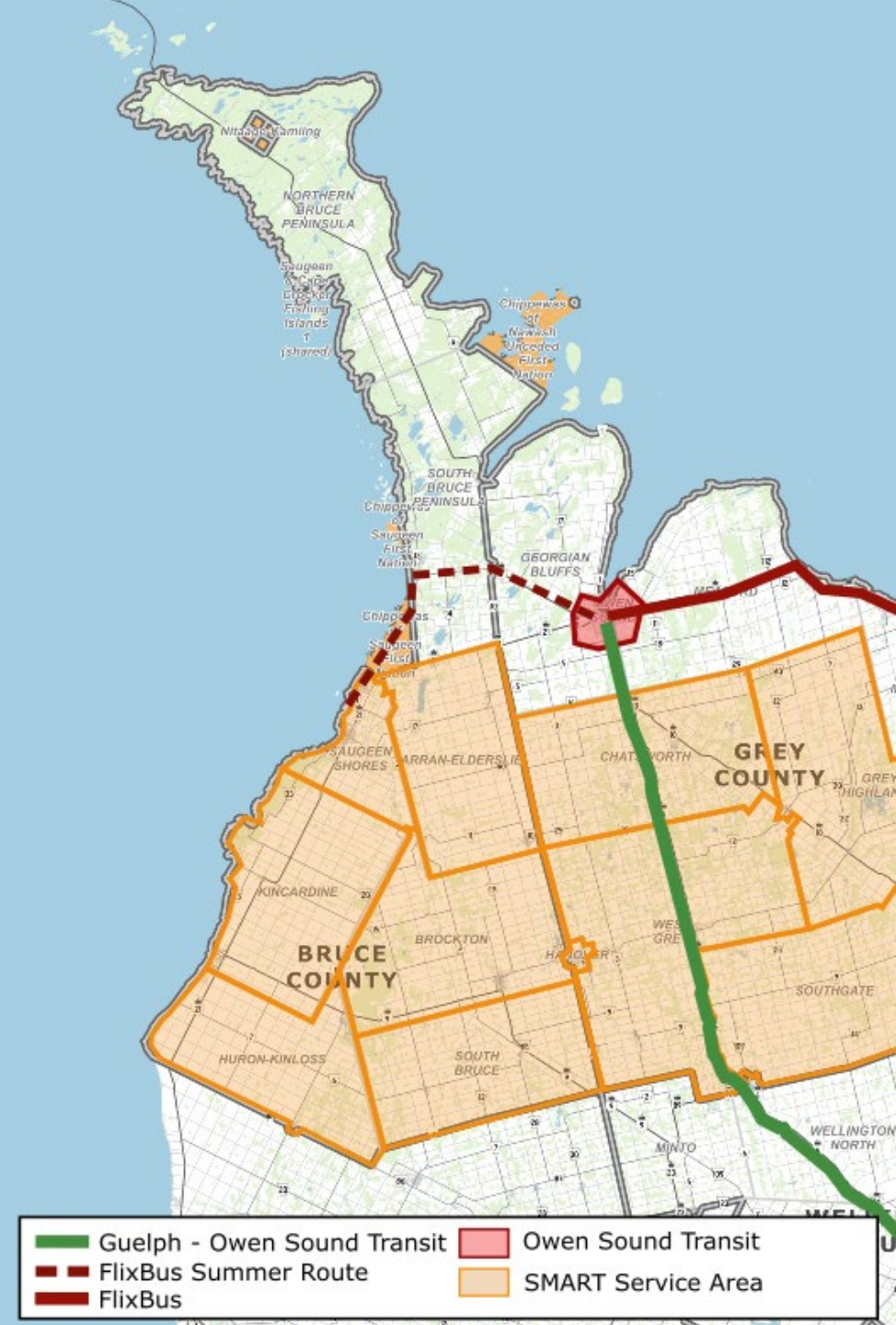
Potential Gaps – Dufferin County

- **Local Transit:**
 - No service outside of Orangeville
- **The "Corridor" Effect:**
 - Inter-community transit limited to Hwy 10, leaving communities just a few kilometres off the main road completely unserved
- **Specialized Transit (persons with disabilities)**
 - No service provided
 - Dufferin County Community Support Services focused on medical trips with shopping trips also offered to seniors



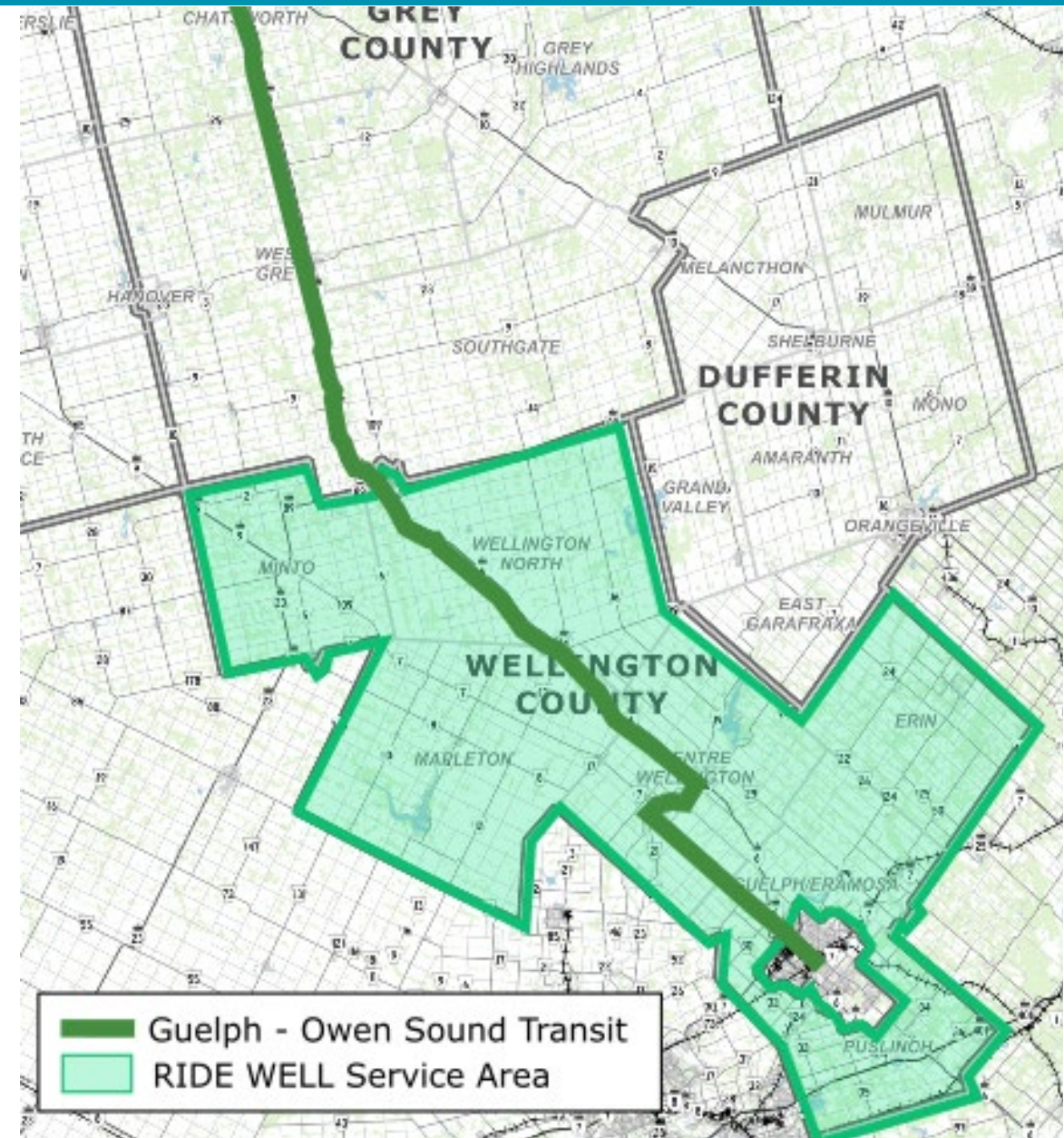
Potential Gaps – Bruce County

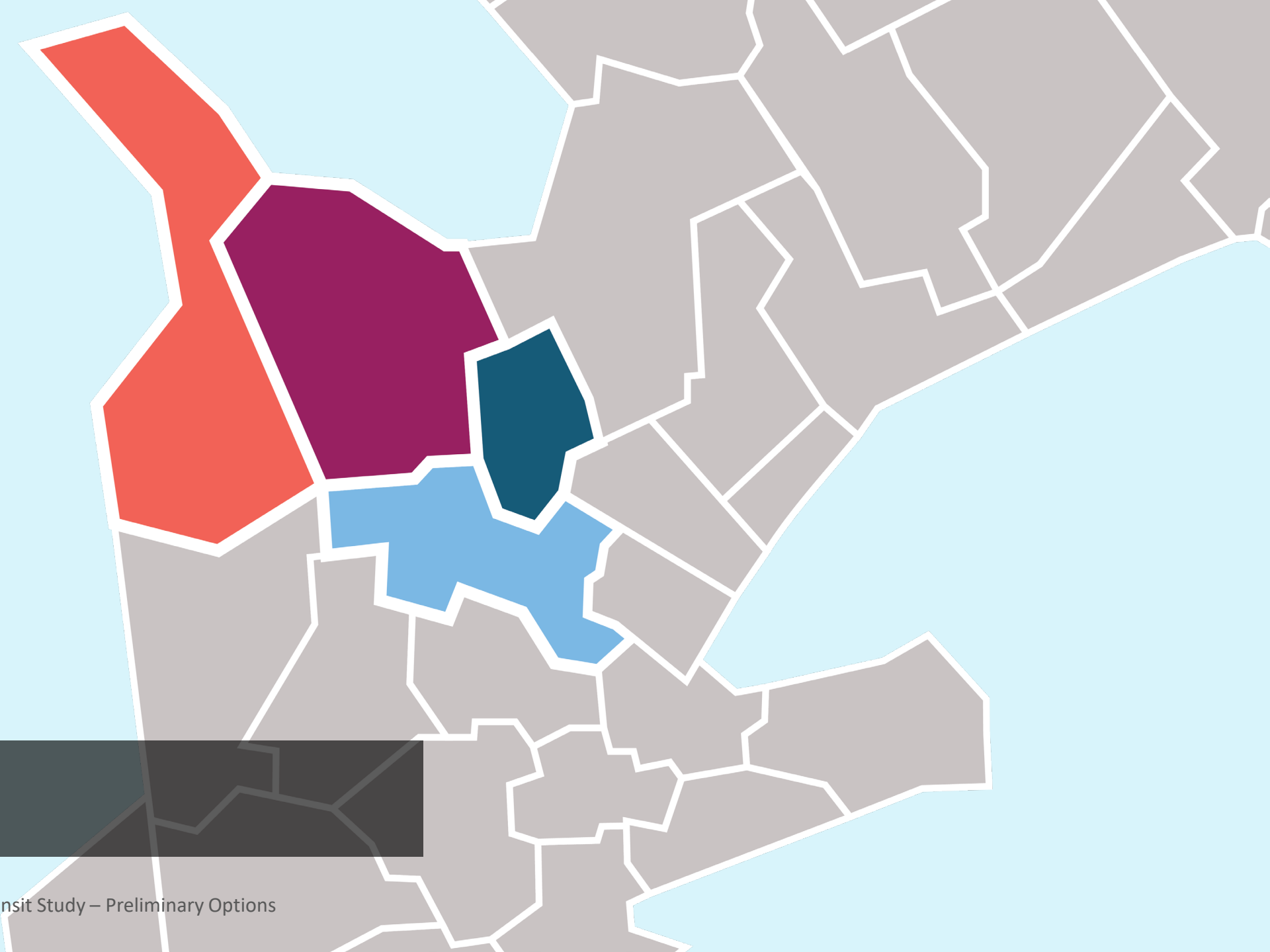
- **Local Transit:**
 - No local service in place
 - Carpool program has limited uptake as low population density makes it difficult to share rides
- **Private carriers**
 - FlixBus provides limited service from Barrie via Owen Sound to Port Elgin
- **Specialized Transit (persons with disabilities)**
 - SMART does not service Northern Bruce Peninsula and the Town of South Bruce Peninsula
 - HCSS of Grey Bruce focuses primarily on medical and adult day program rides and is facing capacity issues to deliver these and other trip requests (e.g. social trips)



Potential Gaps – Wellington County

- **Local Transit:**
 - RIDE WELL service provides full coverage, but very difficult to grow without significant investment
 - Ridership is low and close to capacity
 - Challenges are due to large service area, full service model, making it difficult to get a ride when requested
 - Fergus and Elora are growing and require a more focused fixed-route service
- **The "Corridor" Effect:**
 - Inter-community transit limited to Hwy 6 (GOST) and schedule does not service needs of Wellington residents
 - Not coordinated with RIDE WELL service or GO Train
 - No connections to other travel markets such as Kitchener and Orangeville
- **Specialized Transit (persons with disabilities)**
 - RIDE WELL only has one fully accessible vehicle
 - Community Care agencies provide service for persons with disabilities, but not coordinated with Ride Well





Engagement Summary

Engagement Activities

Public Open Houses / Pop-Up

- Town of Orangeville Open House at Alder Arena
- Virtual Open House
- Flesherton Farmers Market
- Owen Sound Attack Game
- Arthur Arena – Public Skate
- Grey Bruce Farmers Week
- Orangeville Farmers Market

Surveys

- Community Survey
- Employer Survey
- Councillor Survey

Focus Groups

- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Economic Development
- Employers
- Seniors
- Social Services
- Youth and students
- Indigenous Communities
- Amish and Mennonite Communities

Transit 101 Councillor Sessions

- 105 attendees

Stakeholder Meetings

- Home & Community Support Services of Grey-Bruce (HCSS)
- VON Canada (Wellington County)
- Ministry of Transportation Ontario – Gas Tax & OTIF
- Metrolinx – Go Transit & Presto
- Guelph Owen Sound Transit (GOST)
- Grey Transit Route (GTR)
- Orangeville Transit
- Owen Sound Transit
- Guelph Transit
- Collingwood Transit
- Town of The Blue Mountains
- Simcoe LINX
- Owen Sound Transportation Company - Chi-Cheemaun
- FlixBus

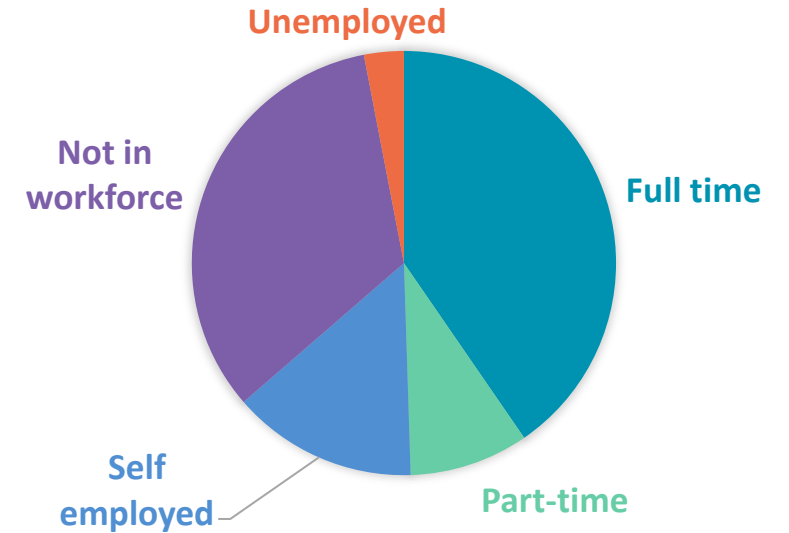
Community Survey - Participant Demographics

3,790
Total Responses

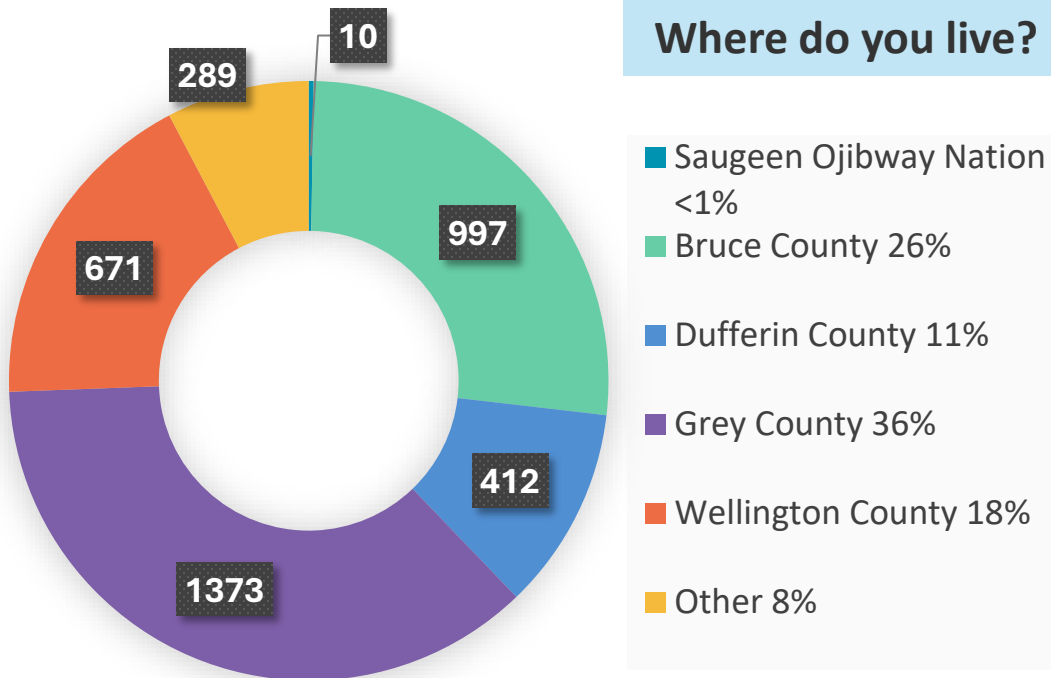
67% Own or lease their own vehicle

81% Have access to a smartphone with data plan

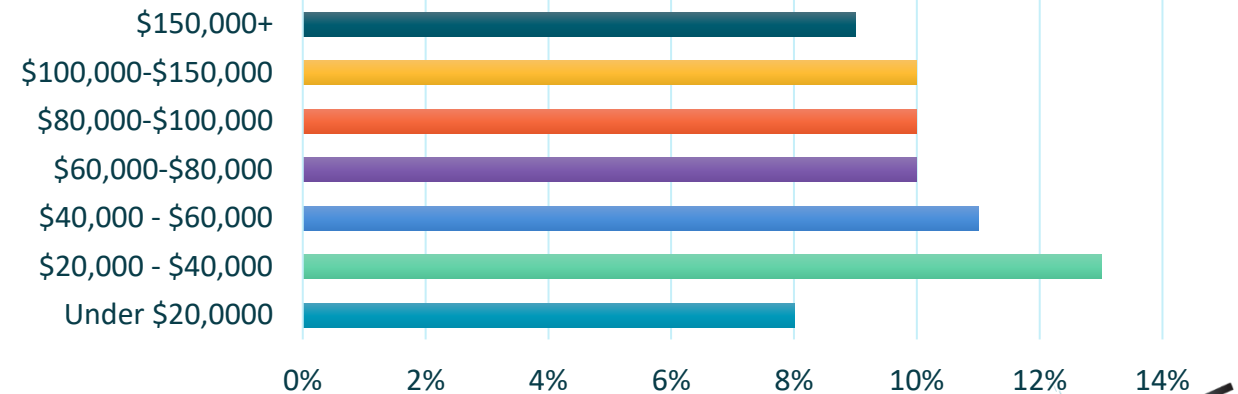
Employment Status



Where do you live?



Current Income



Potential Transit Service Use



Top Priorities

1. Frequent & reliable – 67%
2. Seamless connections to other transit – 56%
3. Improved coverage to all residents – 50%
4. Easy trip planning tools – 43%
5. Low fares -41%
6. Seamless connection to local transit – 37%



How often would you use transit if it were available?

- Never - 20%
- Once per month or less - 32%
- Biweekly - 18%
- Weekly - 25%
- Daily - 4%



Purpose for Using Transit

- Social/ Recreational Use – 54%
- Access GO Transit – 52%
- Shopping/ Errands – 48%
- Medical Appointments – 48%
- School / Work – 28%

Engagement Summary – Focus Groups

Key Themes from Engagement include:

Accessibility

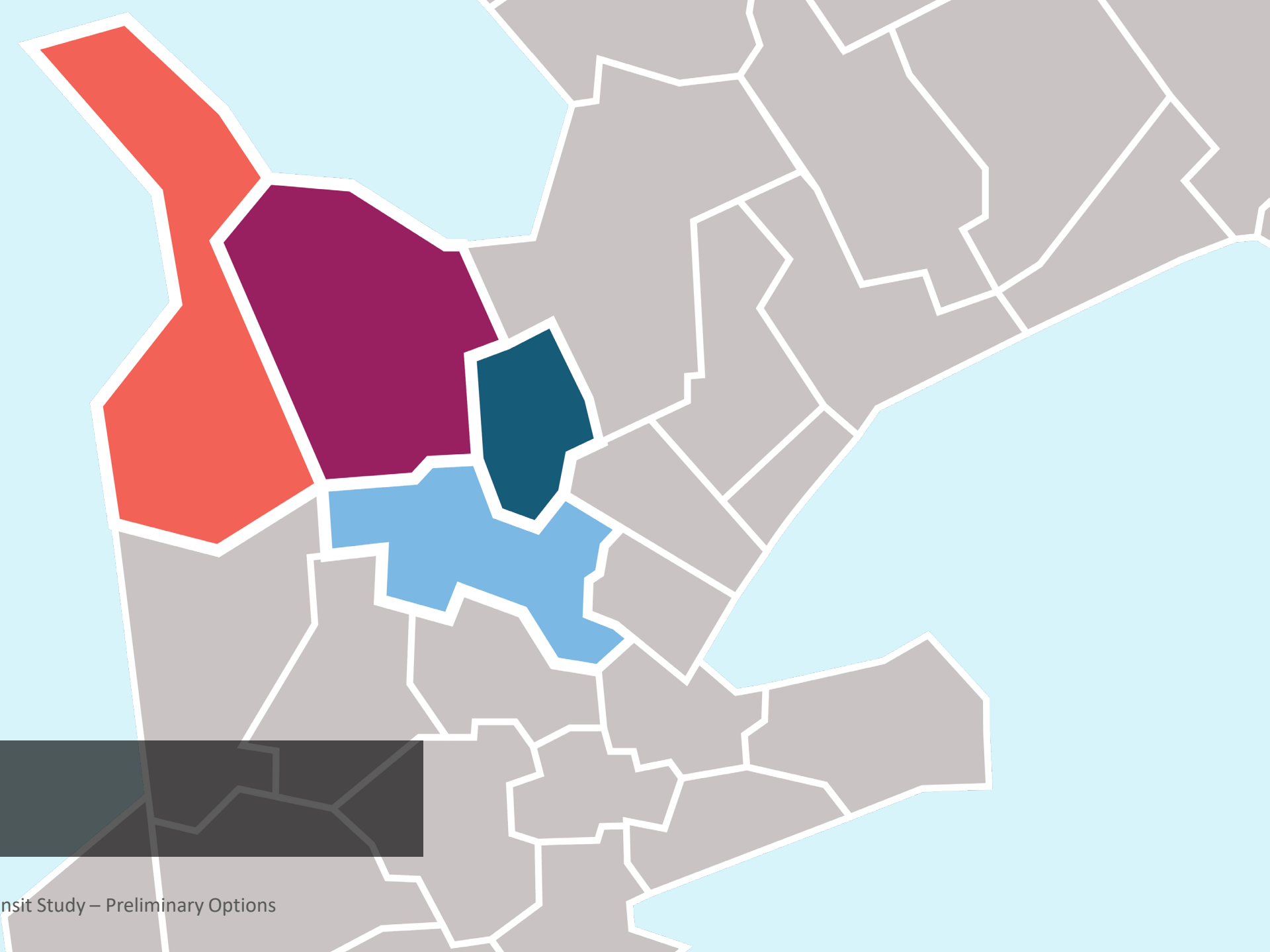
*Economic
Development*

*Regional
Connectivity*

*Health & Social
Wellbeing*

Integration

Tourism



Potential Options

Key Origin – Destination Pairs – Commuter Trips (Census)

Grey County

- Meaford to Owen Sound
- Chatsworth to Owen Sound
- Durham to Hanover

Dufferin County

- Shelburne to Orangeville
- Shelburne and Orangeville to GTA
- Shelburne to New Tecumseth

Bruce County

- Kincardine to Hanover
- Kincardine to Bruce Power
- Port Elgin to Kincardine
- Wiarton to Owen Sound

Wellington County

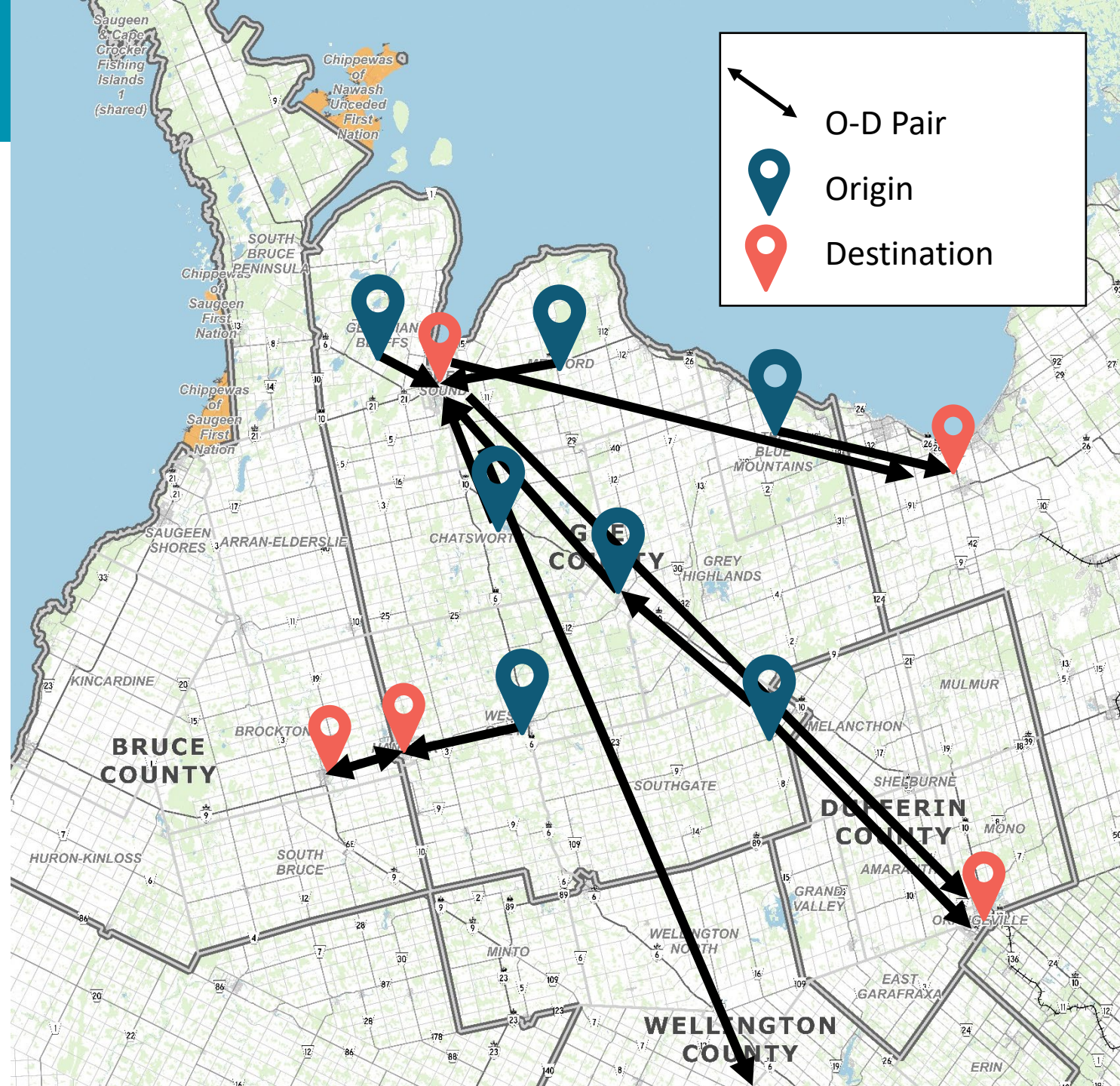
- Fergus/Elora to Guelph and GTA



Grey County O-D Paris

Grey County

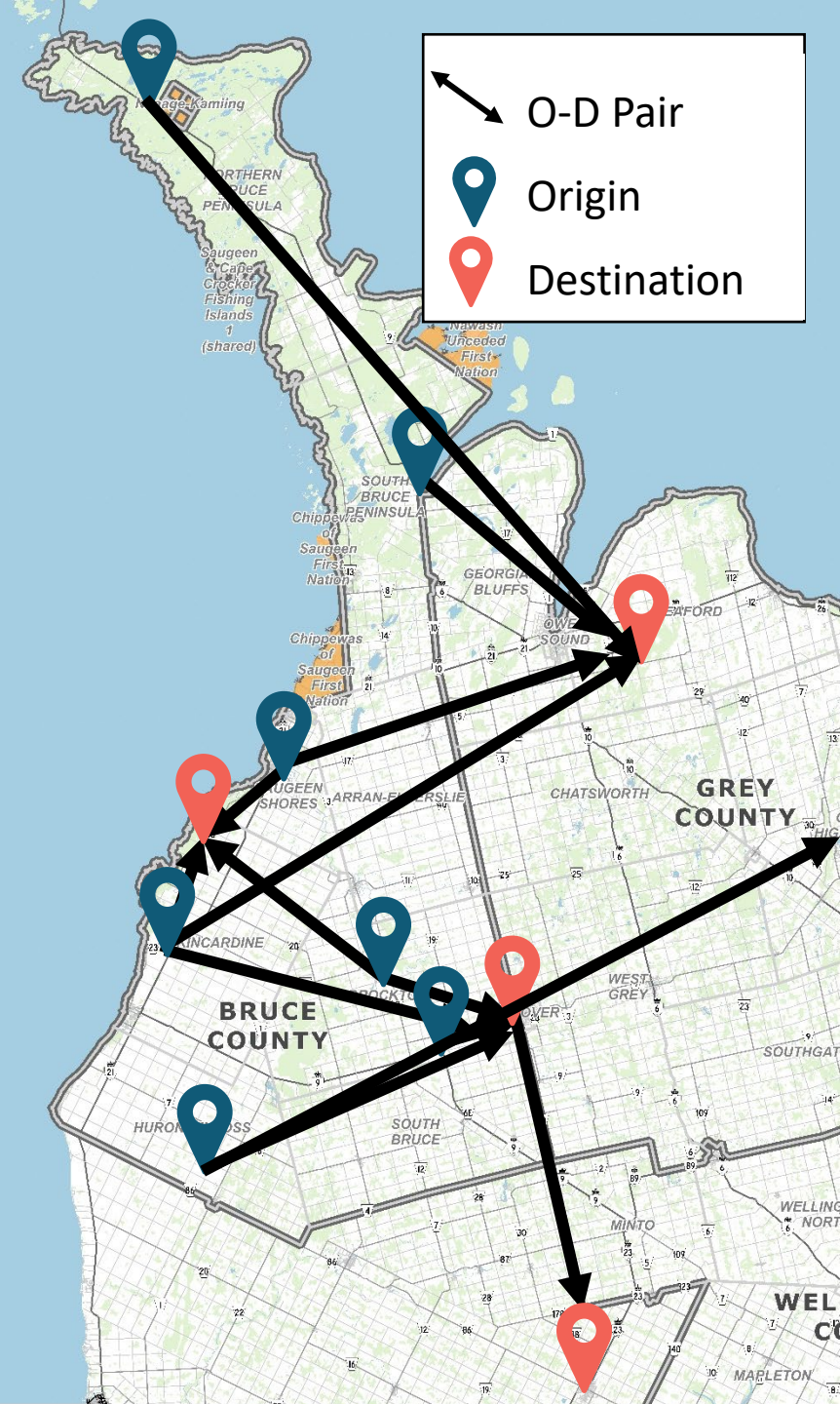
- Meaford to Owen Sound
- The Blue Mountains to Collingwood
- Markdale to Owen Sound
- Dundalk to Owen Sound
- Dundalk to Orangeville
- Durham to Hanover
- Walkerton to/from Hanover
- Owen Sound to GTA (via Guelph or Orangeville)
- Owen Sound to Collingwood / Barrie



Bruce County O-D Pairs

Bruce County

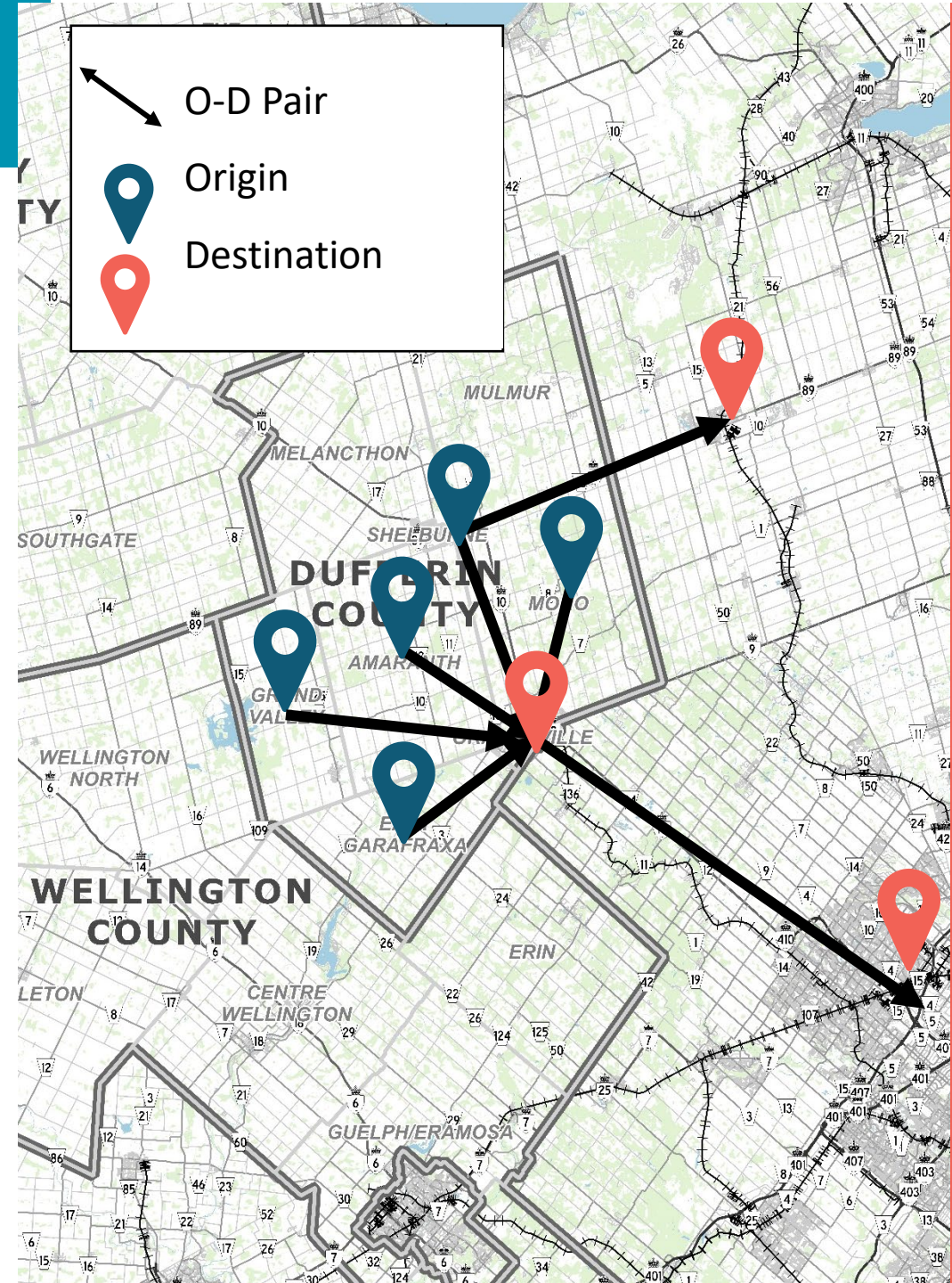
- Kincardine to Owen Sound
- Kincardine to Bruce Power
- Kincardine to Hanover
- Walkerton to Hanover
- Lucknow to Hanover
- Lucknow to Barrie
- Hanover to Listowel
- Port Elgin to Bruce Power
- Saugeen Shores to Owen Sound
- Wiarton to Owen Sound
- Tobermory to Owen Sound



Dufferin County O-D Pairs

Dufferin County

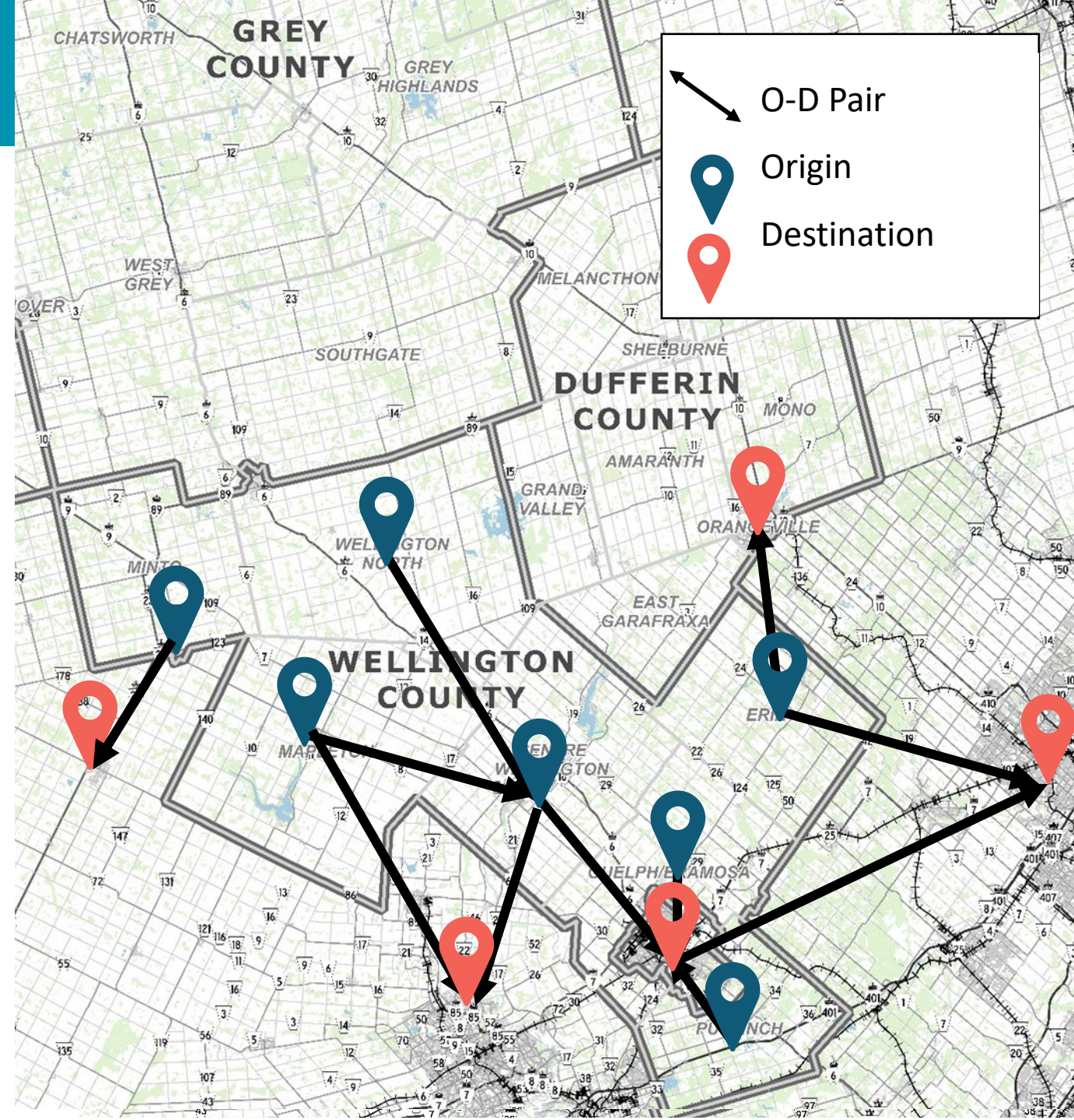
- Shelburne, Mono, Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Grand Valley to Orangeville
- Shelburne to New Tecumseth
- Dufferin County to the GTA



Wellington County O-D Pairs

Wellington County

- Puslinch, Guelph/Eramosa, Centre Wellington to Guelph
- Erin to Orangeville
- Erin to GTA
- Mapleton and Wellington North to Centre Wellington
- Palmerston to Listowel
- Centre Wellington/ Mapleton to Kitchener/ Waterloo
- Guelph to GTA



Vision and Guiding Principles

Vision: Connecting Communities. Building a better future through a seamless, multi-modal transit network.



Equitable, Accessible and Affordable



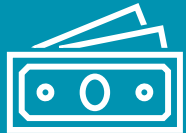
Customer Driven: Seamless, Connected and Easy to Use



Support Growth & Economic Development



Innovative & Forward Thinking



Fiscally Responsible

Opportunities

Inter-community
Transit

Integration with
SMART

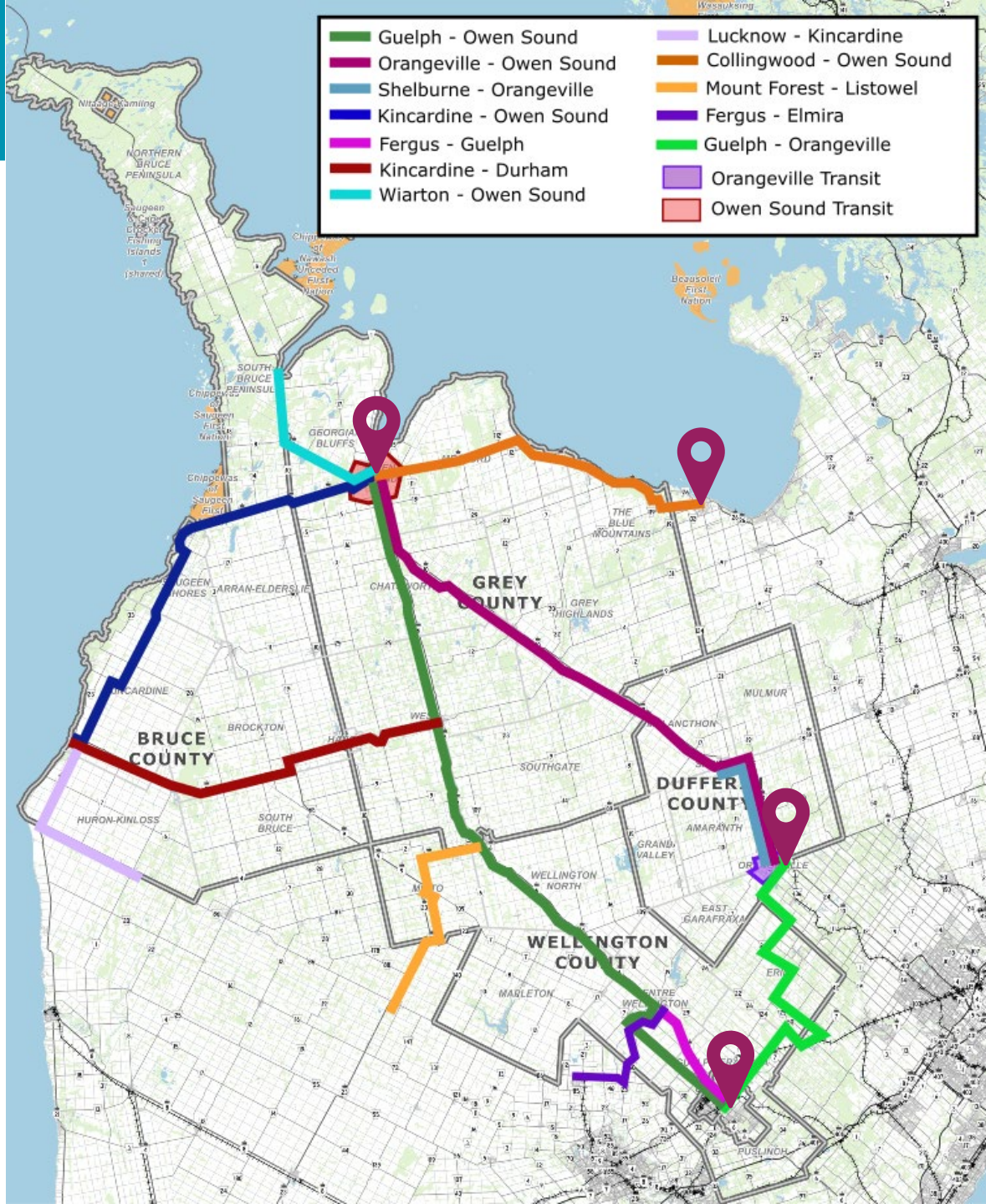
Integration with
Private Sector
Mobility Options

Integration with
Local Transit, GO
Transit and
Community Care

Conceptual Inter-Community Corridor Options (All Routes)

- Inter-community corridors connecting settlement areas to key destinations
- Services should run a minimum three to four times daily to be effective (weekdays)
- Saturday service considered to support discretionary trips and visitors to the Region
- Commuter routes considered for short-distance trips may require more frequent connections
- Seamless travel between municipal boundaries

Guelph - Owen Sound	Lucknow - Kincardine
Orangeville - Owen Sound	Collingwood - Owen Sound
Shelburne - Orangeville	Mount Forest - Listowel
Kincardine - Owen Sound	Fergus - Elmira
Fergus - Guelph	Guelph - Orangeville
Kincardine - Durham	Orangeville Transit
Warton - Owen Sound	Owen Sound Transit



Conceptual Inter-Community Corridor Options I

1. Hwy 6 Corridor (Owen Sound to Guelph)

- Existing GOST service operates twice daily
- Connection to Owen Sound, Guelph and the GO Train network (Kitchener, Brampton, Pearson Airport and Toronto)

2. Owen Sound and Orangeville

- Existing GTR route operates 8 times daily between Dundalk and Orangeville
- Connection to Owen Sound, Orangeville and the GO Bus network (Brampton, Pearson Airport and Toronto)

3. Shelburne and Orangeville

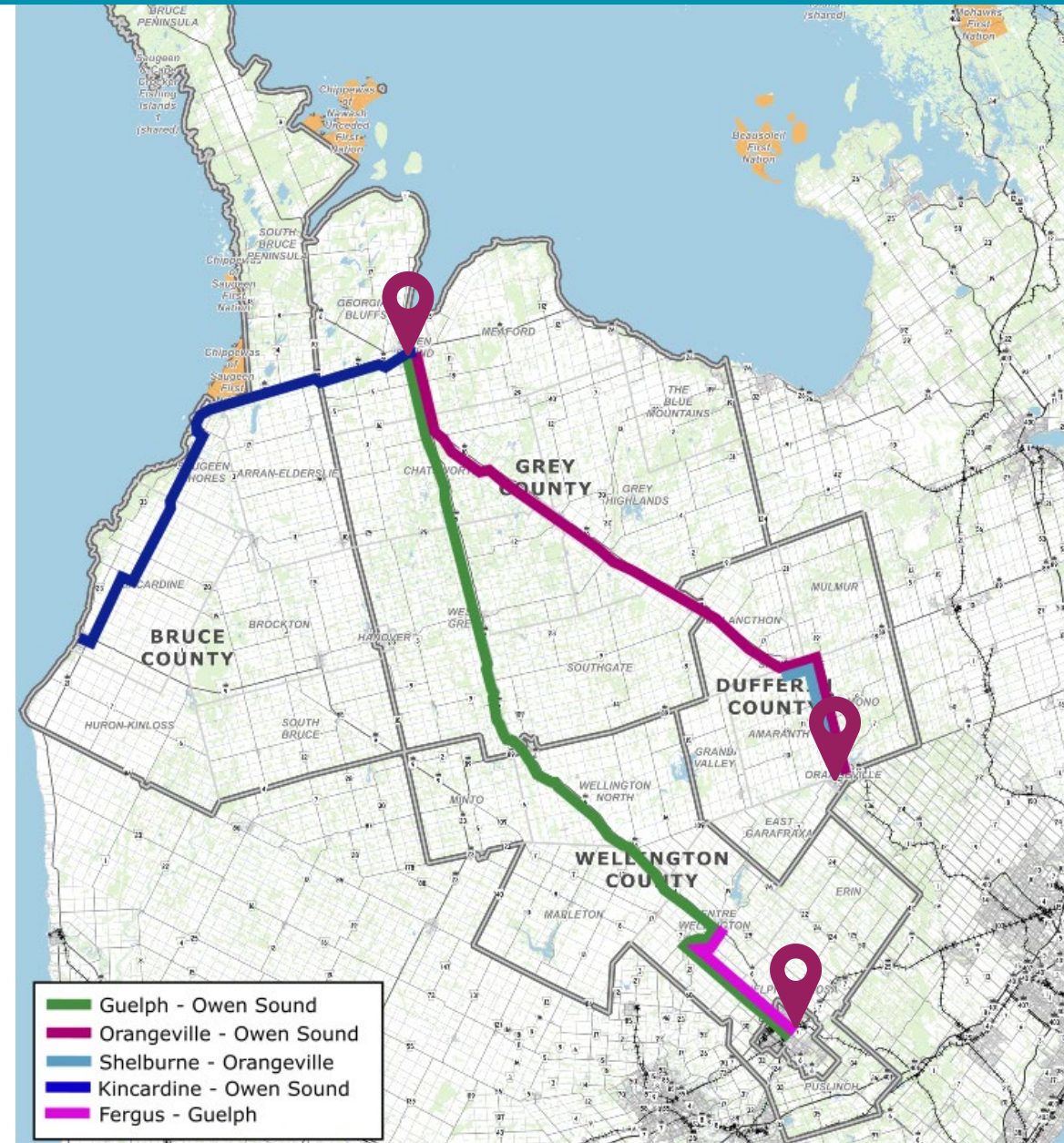
- Served by GTR route between Dundalk and Orangeville
- This section has the highest travel demand on the corridor

4. Kincardine to Owen Sound

- Connects Kincardine, Port Elgin, and Southampton to Owen Sound
- Bruce Power connection on this corridor

5. Fergus/ Elora to Guelph

- Served by route between Guelph and Owen Sound
- Close communities with high travel demand



Conceptual Inter-Community Corridor Options II

6. Kincardine to Durham

- Guelph/Owen Sound via GOST connection in Durham
- Connection to Hanover from Kincardine and Walkerton to the west and Durham to the east
- Connection to potential Highway 6 service to GTA

7. Wiarton to Owen Sound

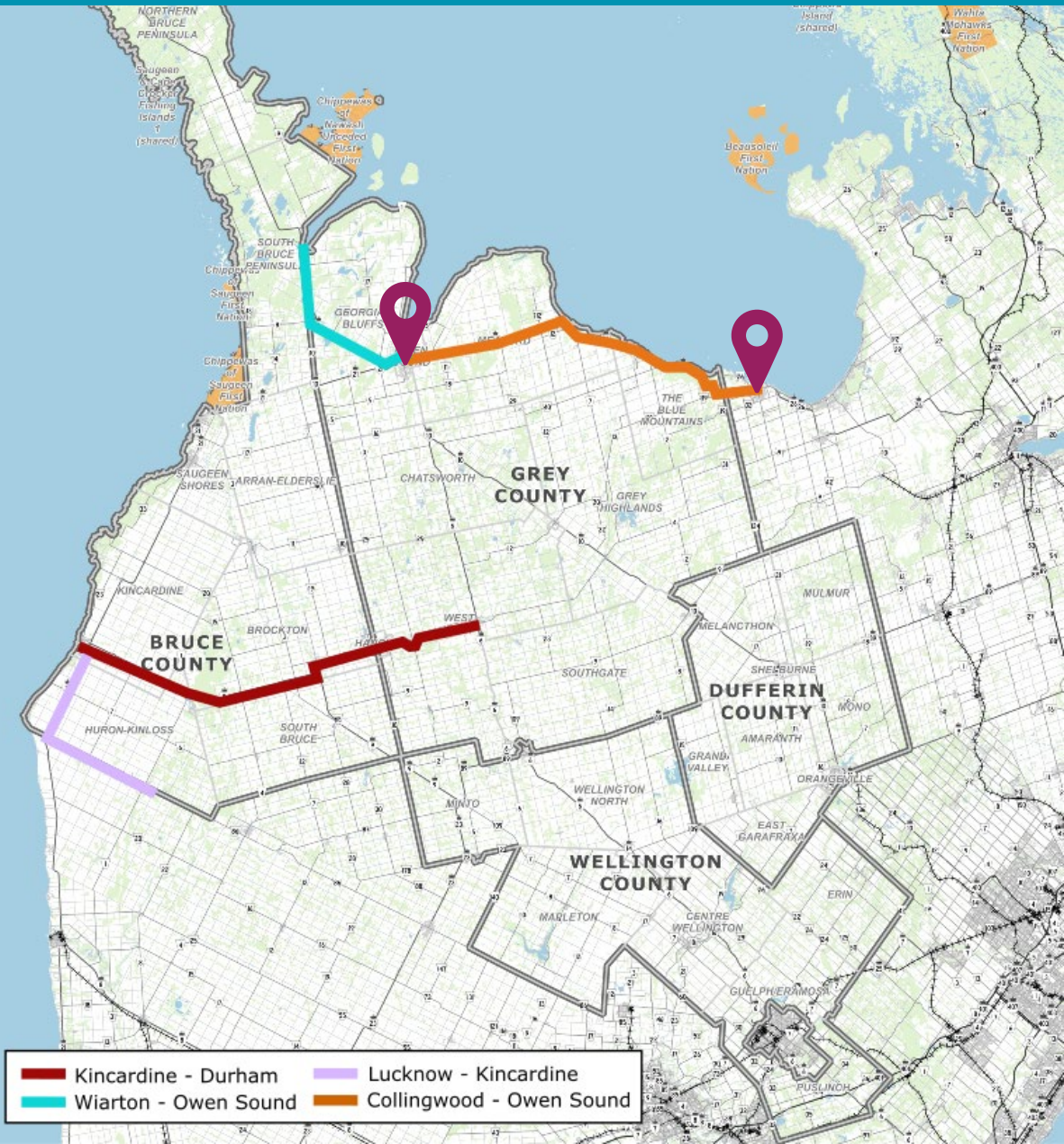
- Wiarton, Georgian Bluffs, Owen Sound
- Summer demand to Sauble Beach
- Short trips to retail in Georgian Bluffs

8. Lucknow to Kincardine

- Connection for Amish and Mennonite communities
- Potential connection to corridors to Hanover and Owen Sound with further connection to Collingwood/Barrie

9. Owen Sound to Collingwood

- Connects Meaford to Owen Sound and Blue Mountains to Collingwood (Simcoe LINX connection to Barrie and GO Transit)
- FlixBus runs along this corridor once daily (Thursday to Sunday)



Conceptual Inter-Community Corridor Options III

10. Mount Forest to Listowel

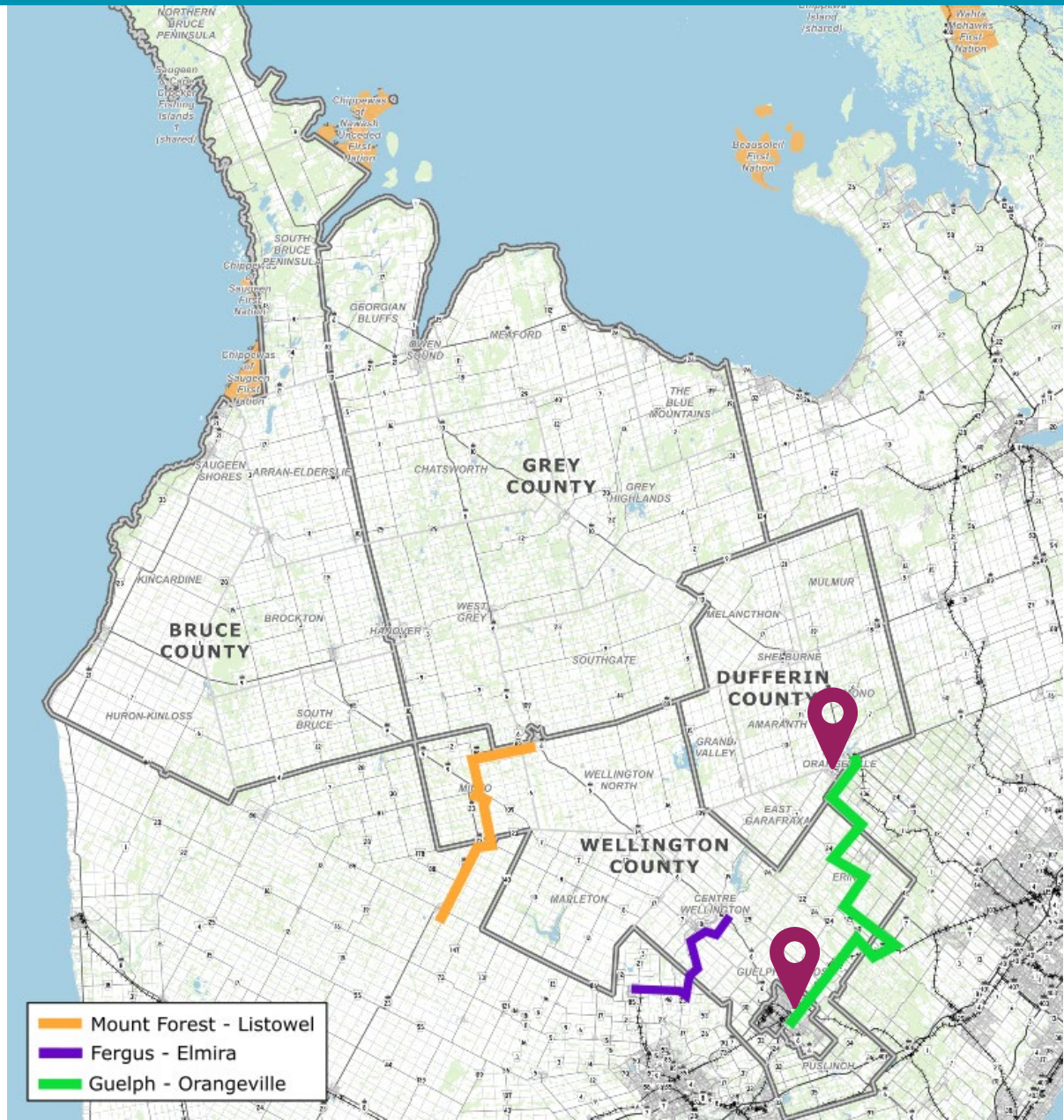
- Travel demand between Mount Forest, Harriston, Palmerston, and Listowel
- Connection to PC Connect (to Kitchener with potential extension to Stratford)

11. Fergus/Elora to Kitchener/Waterloo via Elmira

- Connection between Fergus/Elora with potential stop in Inverhaugh to Kitchener Waterloo
- Transfer opportunity on GRT to St. Jacobs, Conestoga Mall and post secondary institutions

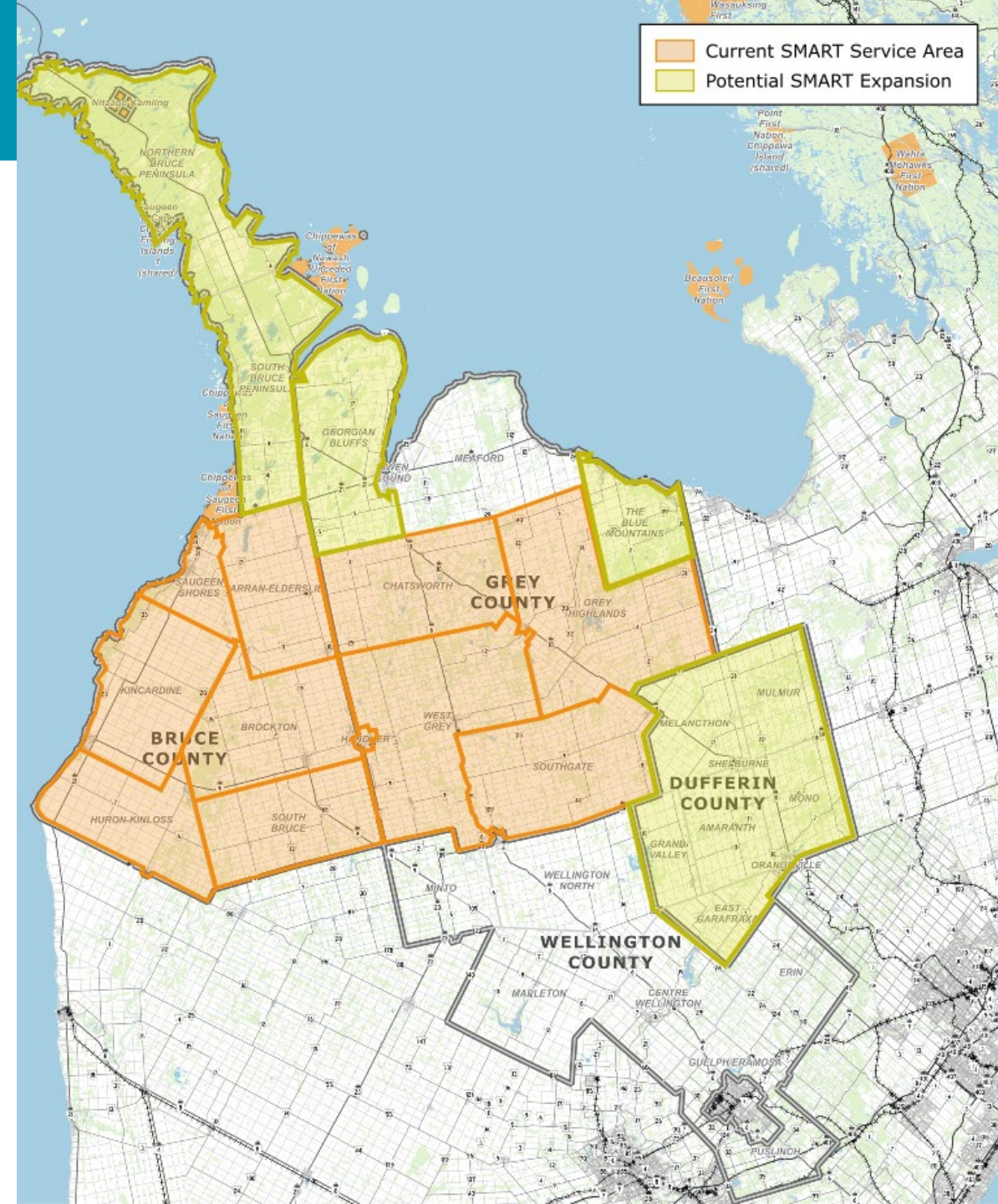
12. Guelph to Orangeville

- Connection between Guelph, Rockwood, Acton, Erin, Caledon, and Orangeville
- Provides connection to GO Train in Acton

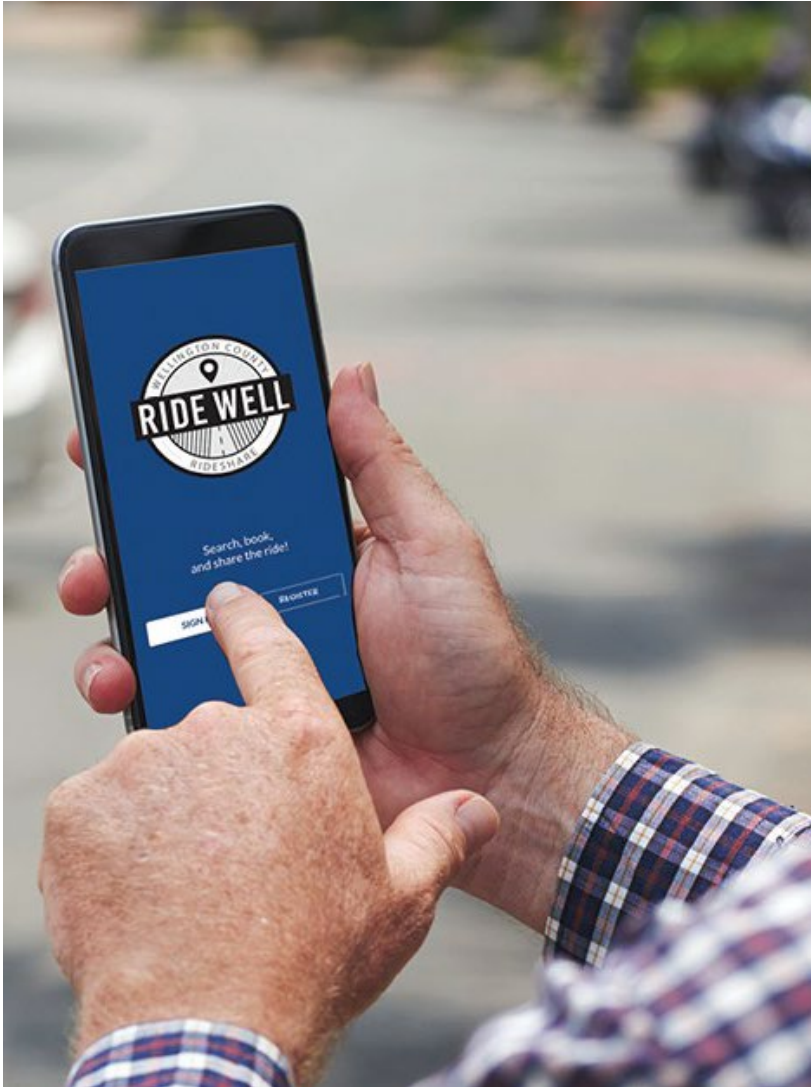


Contract On-Demand Service to SMART

- Expand service area to Dufferin County to provide co-mingled service (specialized transit and on-demand connections to connect to inter-community routes and Orangeville Transit)
- Explore also using Dufferin County Community Support Services in a similar capacity
- Open eligibility to reduce deadheading (currently 53% of total vehicle hours) and increase rides per hour
- Convert existing part-time drivers to full-time drivers – no capital required
- Utilize existing vehicles that are currently not in service (requires some level of investment)



Integration with the Private Sector



- Open taxi and rideshare regulations across four Counties to encourage expansion of Taxis and Transportation Network Companies (currently done with Ride Well)
- Explore an on-demand app that allows riders to utilize private sector and community transportation providers to connect to inter-community service
- Consider fare reduction on inter-community transit when a passenger uses an on-demand service to connect (provides coverage without a significant increase in cost)
- Work with private sector inter-community carriers to make trips visible on a single app and consider fare subsidies for trips within the four counties
- Procure an on-demand technology provider

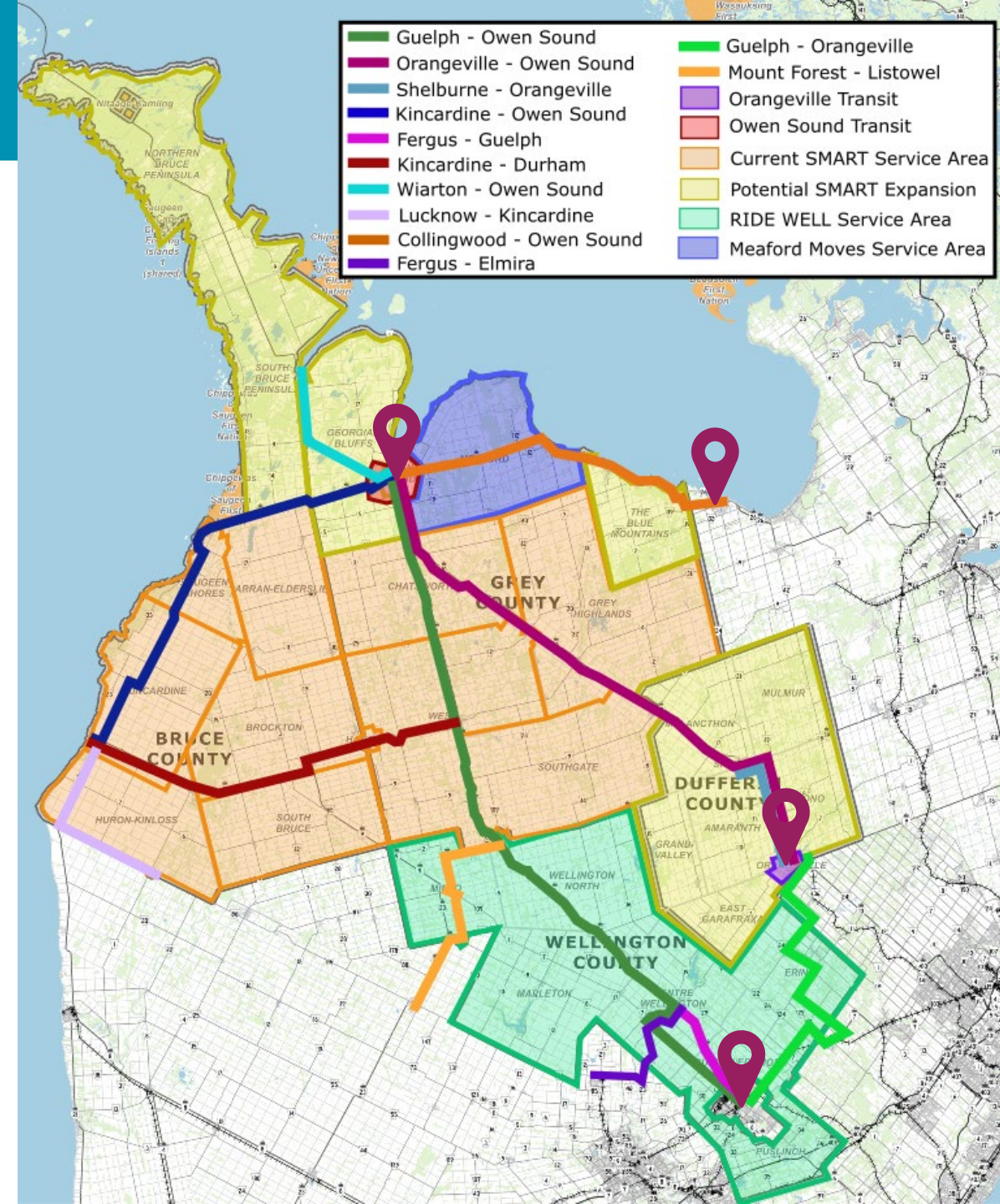
Integration with Local Transit, GO Transit and Community Care

- Coordinate schedules with local transit systems at terminals
- Better utilize Ride Well to connect to the inter-community corridors
- Explore potential to utilize Dufferin County Community Support Services to connect to inter-community corridor
- Explore potential integration with Meaford Moves and specialized transit in Owen Sound and The Blue Mountains
- Connect to Colltrans (Collingwood) and Simcoe Linx
- Ensure all routes/services are visible on Google Maps or other trip planning tools to enhance trip planning
- Provide longer layover at GO Train/Bus stops to ensure connections in Orangeville and Guelph
- Work with Metrolinx to participate in OneFare program (likely 2028-2029)



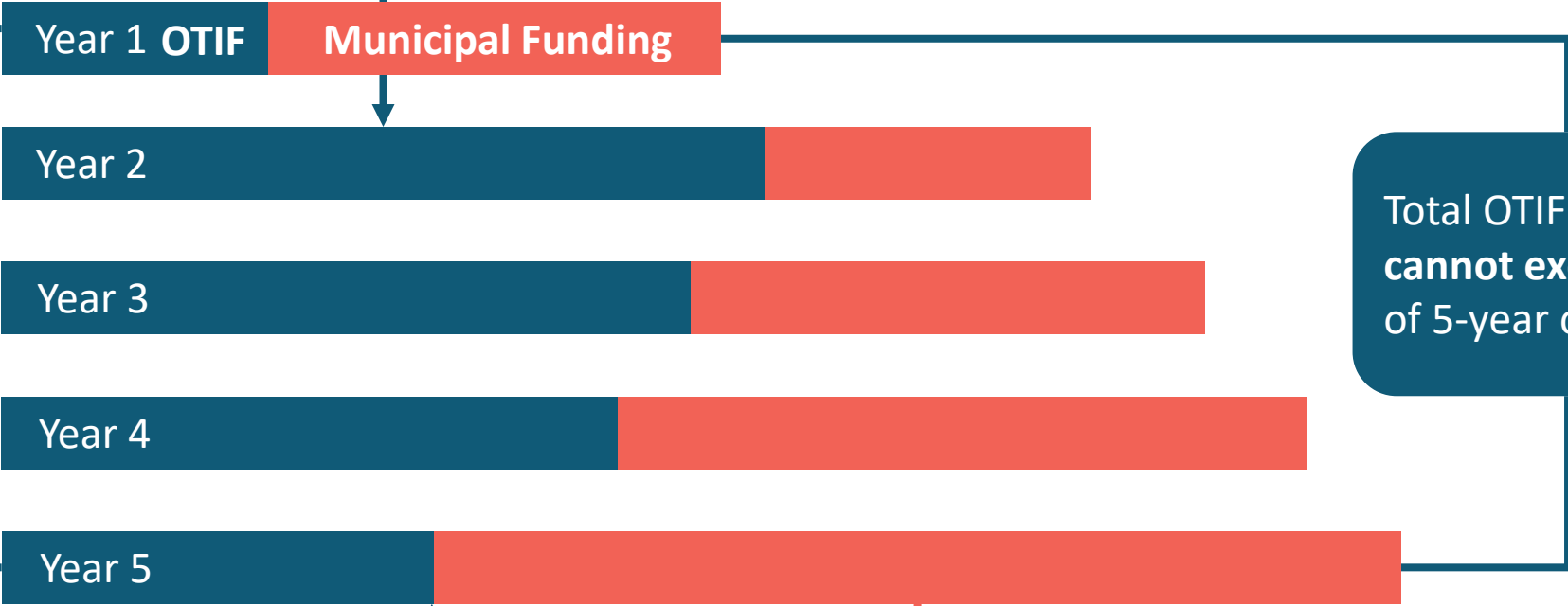
Summary of Opportunities

- Create spine network across high demand corridors
- Expand SMART to unserved areas
- Explore other partnerships with Community Support network (e.g. in Dufferin County)
- Utilize extra capacity of SMART to provide connections to corridors (potential for fare integration)
- Take advantage of private mobility providers by opening the market (provide choice)
- Explore potential to provide fare subsidy if a private carrier duplicates or connects to an inter-community route
- Monitor ridership and identify the need to add additional corridors to off-set on-demand
- Apply for expansion of OTIF for Wellington County
- Work with Metrolinx to participate in OneFare program to connect to the GO Transit network



OTIF Funding

Maximum annual OTIF contribution of 70% of total cost



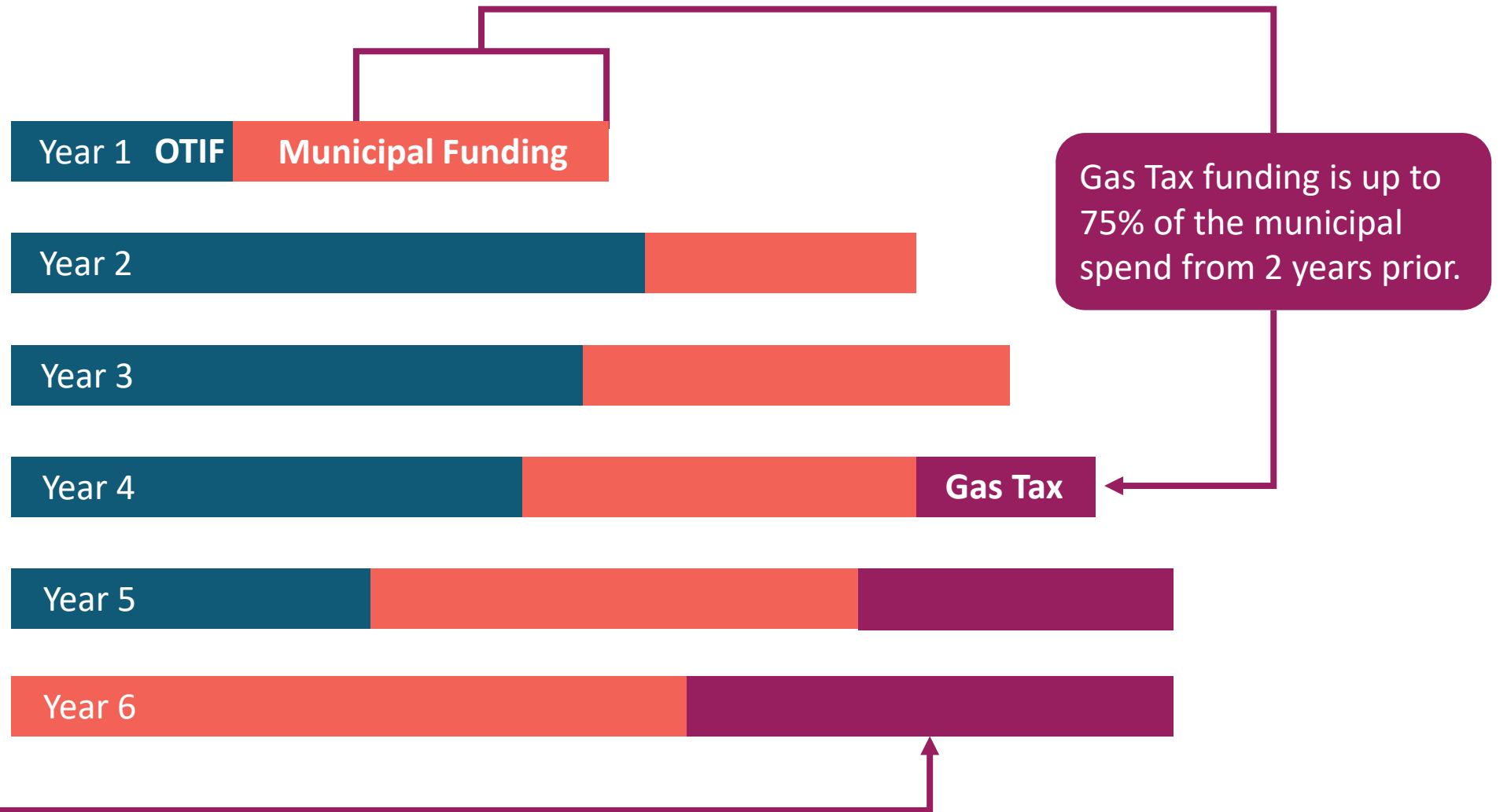
Maximum OTIF allocation over 5 years = \$9,495,000

Total OTIF funding cannot exceed 50% of 5-year costs

Maximum OTIF contribution in Year 5 is 30%

“Municipal Funding” includes fare revenue and municipal investment

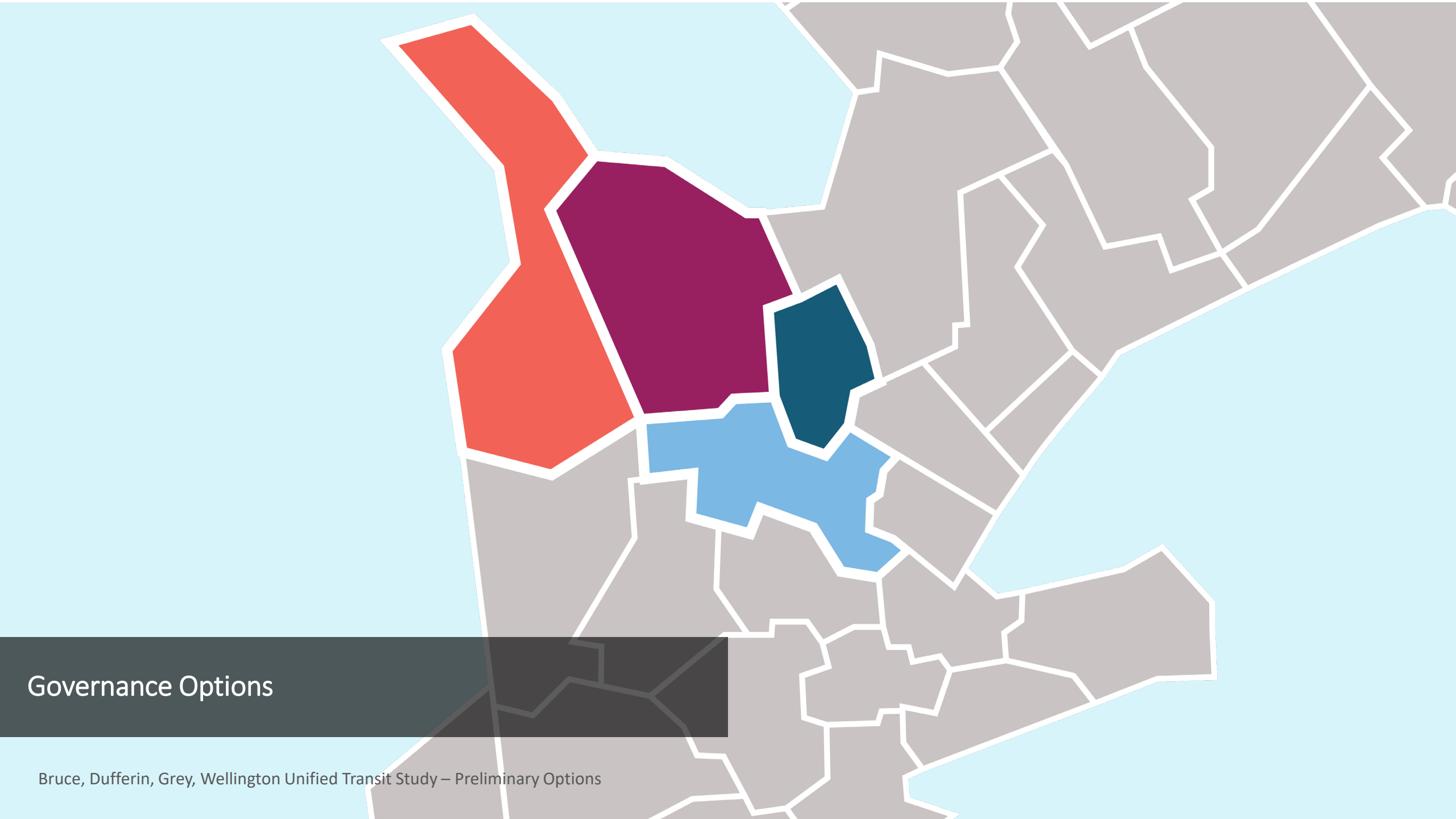
Provincial Gas Tax



Examples of Ridership Expectations and Operating Costs

Type of Service	Example	Boardings per Hour	Example Service Level	Annual Operating Cost*
Long Distance Inter-Community Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guelph Owen Sound Transit GTR from Owen Sound to Orangeville Kincardine to Owen Sound 	3-6	3 – 5 daily trips, 6 days per week	\$300,000 - \$820,000
Short Distance Inter-Community Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shelburne to Orangeville Fergus / Elora to Guelph 	5-10	3 – 5 daily trips, 6 days per week	\$150,000 - \$270,000
On Demand Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional SMART vehicle 	1-2	10 hours daily, 6 days per week	\$200,000 - \$250,000

**Note: Costs are high level range to operate the corridors and on-demand service. These do not include passenger fare revenue.*



Governance Options

Bruce, Dufferin, Grey, Wellington Unified Transit Study – Preliminary Options

Inter-Municipal Shared Service Agreement (Lead Municipality Model)

Authority & Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One County designated as legal service provider• Other Counties participate via service agreement• Transit remains legally within lead County• Authority derived from service contract, not separate governance body
Local Autonomy & Regional Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High operational control by lead County• Participating Counties retain funding authority• Regional integration dependent on strength of agreement• Perceived governance imbalance possible
Financial Authority, Transparency & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead County consolidates all revenues, assets, liabilities• Participating Counties record payments as operating expense• Clean separation from books of non-lead Counties• Simplest audit treatment
Comparators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kingston / Loyalist Township• Collingwood / Town of The Blue Mountains• Midland / Penetanguishene

Municipally Governed Non-Profit Corporation (Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act)

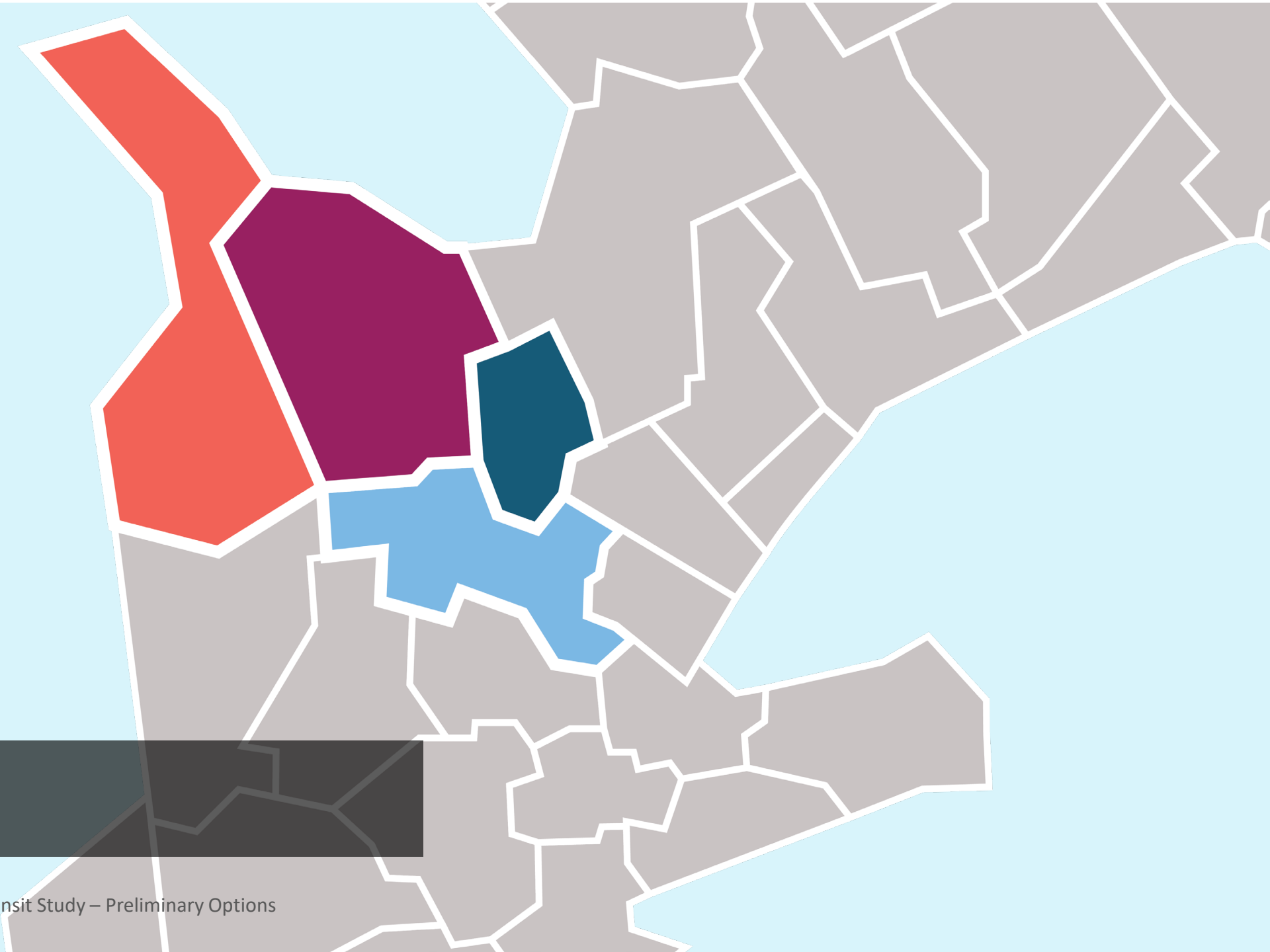
Authority & Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Separate legal corporation• Municipalities act as members (not shareholders)• Board appointed by participating Counties• Mandate defined in Articles and Members' Agreement• Authority exercised independently within corporate governance framework
Local Autonomy & Regional Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong regional identity• Higher operational independence• Reduced direct council control• Governance stability beyond election cycles
Financial Authority, Transparency & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can own assets and contract directly• May borrow independently• Requires independent audit and corporate financial statements
Comparators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SMART• Swift Rural Broadband (WOWC)

Joint Municipal Services Board (MSB) (Part XII – Municipal Act, 2001)

Authority & Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Created by concurrent by-laws of Grey, Bruce, Wellington, and Dufferin• Delegated authority from participating Counties• Local board structure (not a corporation)• Mandate defined in enabling by-laws and inter-municipal agreement
Local Autonomy & Regional Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shared governance via appointed board representation• Balances regional integration with municipal oversight• Counties retain ultimate political authority• Moderate independence for operations
Financial Authority, Transparency & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget typically approved by participating Counties• Assets and liabilities generally consolidated proportionately under PSAS• Borrowing flows through municipalities• Subject to municipal audit and reporting standards• High transparency through council reporting structures
Comparators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Niagara Transit Commission• Bow Valley Regional Services Commission (Alberta)

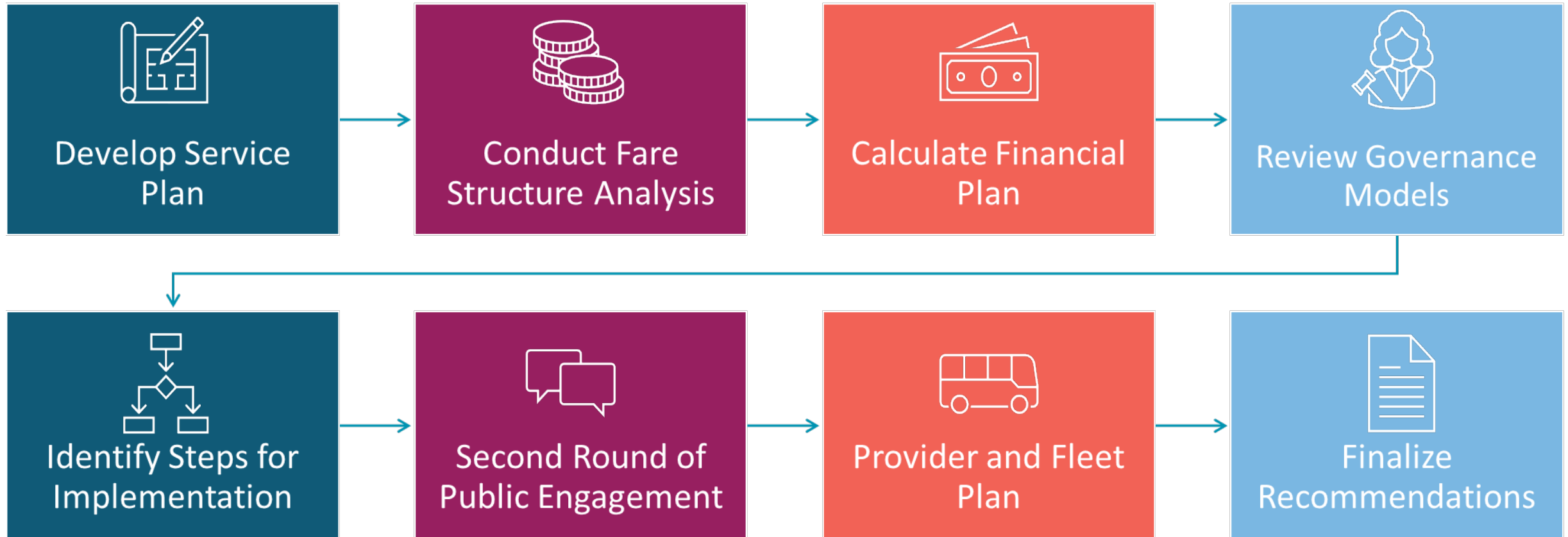
Governance Evaluation Criteria

- **Strategic Authority & Mandate**
 - Evaluates legal and organizational capacity to plan and manage unified regional transit networks effectively
- **Balance of Regional Integration & Local Control**
 - Assesses how local autonomy and region-wide coordination balance to improve cross-border service continuity
- **Financial Authority & Sustainability**
 - Measures ability to support multi-year budgets, fare-setting, and resource sharing for stable operations
- **Transparency & Accountability**
 - Ensures open, publicly defensible decision-making complying with public-sector standards for trust



Next Steps

Proposed Next Steps



Discussion Questions

1. Do you have any comments on the draft preliminary options identified?
 - Conceptual long and short distance inter-community corridors
 - Integration with SMART
 - Integration with the private sector
2. If we need to prioritize, should we focus on:
 - Improving level of service on high demand inter-community corridors
 - Implementing lower-demand corridors to expand coverage
 - Expanding on-demand service so all residents have access to transit
3. Do you have any comments on the governance models identified or the attributes we will use to assess each?
4. What are the key measures of success that should be in place to mitigate risk and eventual loss of funding?

Thank You!



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Partner, Dillon Consulting Limited
dkar@dillon.ca