



## **Subject: Rural Transit Services Update**

### **APPROVALS:**

Tony O'Doherty, Acting Director  
Robert Billard, Acting Executive Director  
Kevin Scoble, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

### **Administrative Recommendation:**

THAT the Rural Transit Services Update be accepted as information.

### **Summary:**

During the period of transition from a contractor to in-house transit services, Administration has been working on a Transit Master Plan, which is a guiding document that aligns with a pillar of Council's Strategic Plan: "Building a Reliable Transportation Network". The Master Plan will guide the Municipality in the future planning, budgeting and implementation of stated goals and objectives for transit services in the region.

Administration has been working with the communities of Fort McKay, Conklin, Janvier, Anzac, Gregoire Lake Estates and Saprae Creek Estates in an effort to improve transit services by January 1, 2017, when Transit will introduce a complete overhaul of the urban and rural routing. Resident engagement sessions are planned to begin with the Spring Trade Show and continue until the end of May 2016.

### **Background:**

In September 2015, Administration hosted numerous public engagement sessions and meetings within the Region with the intent of obtaining feedback from the residents as to their specific needs for transit. The rural areas were very insistent about the need to improve transit both during the sessions and through the surveys. Currently, transit is provided to Conklin, Janvier, Anzac and Gregoire Lake through a contractor at \$10.00 per ride for adults and \$5.00 per ride for children, with minimal service of not more than twice per week.

The residents who live along Highway #881 in the hamlet communities of Conklin, Janvier, Anzac and Gregoire Lake expressed a desire for increased transit that would link them to the urban transit system and open up opportunities for transportation to school and employment. Transit is currently exploring opportunities that may increase service in those areas as early as January 1, 2017, which will be brought back to Council later this year.

The leadership and residents within the hamlet of Fort McKay have expressed a desire for the transit system to extend services to Fort McKay. Transit is working with First Nation and Metis Nation Relations along with the residents to determine the level of service they require.

A door to door survey will be done in April/May 2016 to better understand the travel patterns required to provide a service that will meet the needs of the community. The intent is to

introduce a transit pilot project to and from Fort McKay in September 2016 after the community has been consulted and data has been captured to determine the required service hours, the cost of service as well the required fare structure. Transit Administration will return to Council with a recommendation for the fare structure and delivery of service prior to implementing the service.

**Budget/Financial Implications:**

Operational funding was captured in the 2016 operating budget to provide a service to Fort McKay. Transit Services has the equipment to provide the service, but may require additional staffing which was not captured in the 2016 budget. Administration will return to Council with further details and a recommendation before June 2016.

Administration will present an overall operational plan along with the Transit Master Plan. In this report, Administration will address the frequency of service along with any staffing requirements to enhance transit to the rural hamlets.

**Rationale for Recommendation:**

Improving the connectivity of transit is aligned with the 2015-2017 Strategic Plan to, “Build a Reliable Transportation Network.” Providing regular transit to rural hamlets will enhance the quality of life throughout the Region while improving sustainable transportation initiatives.

**Strategic Plan Linkages:**

Pillar 1 – Building Responsible Government  
Pillar 2 – Building Balanced Regional Services  
Pillar 3 – Building a Vibrant Economy Together  
Pillar 5 – Building a Reliable Transportation System  
Pillar 6 – Building a Sustainable Region  
Pillar 7 – Building for a Healthy and Active Lifestyle