

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study Summary of Feedback Round 2 Engagement

Prepared by LURA Consulting for
Dennis Fletcher & Associates and the City of Owen Sound

September 1, 2021

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.
Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

Table of Contents

Project Context	1
Overview of Engagement Process.....	1
Round Two Stakeholder and Public Engagement Sessions.....	1
Round Two Questionnaire	2
Overview of Communication Activities	2
What We Heard – Summary of Feedback	2
Feedback on Fixed Route Transit Options.....	5
Feedback on Fixed Route Evening and Weekend Service	8
Feedback on On-Demand Transit Options	11
Feedback on Bus Fares and Fleets.....	14
General Feedback for the City and Project Team.....	18

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.
Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

Project Context

The City of Owen Sound is undergoing a Transit Optimization Review process. It aims to assess the existing transit service delivery model and identify any areas of improvement to optimize the current transit system. The evaluation may also result in a request for a proposal process to secure additional transit service providers that meet the community's needs in a financially feasible manner.

Overview of Engagement Process

The project involved a three-stage engagement process, starting with a Guiding Principles Workshop followed by two rounds of Stakeholders and Public Engagement. A summary of engagement tactics and participation is provided in the table below.

Round	Engagement Activity	Number of Participants
Before Round One	Guiding Principles Workshop	15
One	Stakeholder and Public Engagement Session #1	1
One	Stakeholder and Public Engagement Session #2	5
One	Online and Telephone Questionnaire	120
One	Paper Questionnaire	11
Two	Stakeholder and Public Engagement Session #1	2
Two	Stakeholder and Public Engagement Session #2	4
Two	Online Questionnaire	31
Two	Paper Questionnaire	4

This report provides a summary of the engagement conducted during Round Two.

Four potential transit service options were presented to participants for feedback, and they are as follow:

- Fixed Route Transit Option 1
- Fixed Route Transit Option 2
- On-demand Service Option A
- On-demand Service Option B

In addition, participants were asked to provide feedback for the following additional transit elements:

- Fixed Route Evening and Weekend Service
- Bus fleets and fares

Round Two Stakeholder and Public Engagement Sessions

Round Two Stakeholder and Public Engagement Sessions were designed to present the potential transit service options and gather feedback for improvements. Two sessions were held at different times of the day to accommodate different participant schedules. The first session was held on August 4, 2021, from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm. The second session was held on August 5, 2021, from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm. Both sessions were held virtually on Zoom and were facilitated by LURA Consulting. The virtual meetings included a presentation and opportunities to provide feedback. Overall, there were 41 participants in Round Two.

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

Round Two Questionnaire

The Round Two questionnaire was designed to present the potential transit service options, gather feedback from the public and stakeholders about their transit preferences and ways to enhance the service options. The questionnaire was available online through the City's website and in hard copy format from August 6 to August 20, 2021. Different formats were made available helped to ensure that individuals with limited or no internet access can also participate in the project.

Overview of Communication Activities

Project Webpage

The City of Owen Sound hosted a webpage for the project, which provided information about the project, how to participate in the process, and information about potential service options. The project webpage is <https://www.owensound.ca/en/city-hall/transit-study.aspx#>

Social Media

Social media was used to inform community members about the project and encourage participation in engagement activities. Social media platforms used included Facebook (City of Owen Sound) and Twitter (@CityOwenSound and @OwenSoundHub).

Posters & Signage

Posters and signage were made available in transit stops to inform community members about the project and encourage participation in engagement activities.

What We Heard – Summary of Feedback

The following is a summary of feedback received through Round Two Engagement Activities, as outlined above.

Questionnaire participants were asked, "How often do you use Owen Sound Transit?" (Figure 1). Many participants indicated that they use transit at least once a week (34 percent). Some are daily transit users (17 percent). About one-fifth of participants indicated that they have never used transit before in Owen Sound (20 percent). For some participants (17 percent), the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the reasons that they stopped using transit.

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.
Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

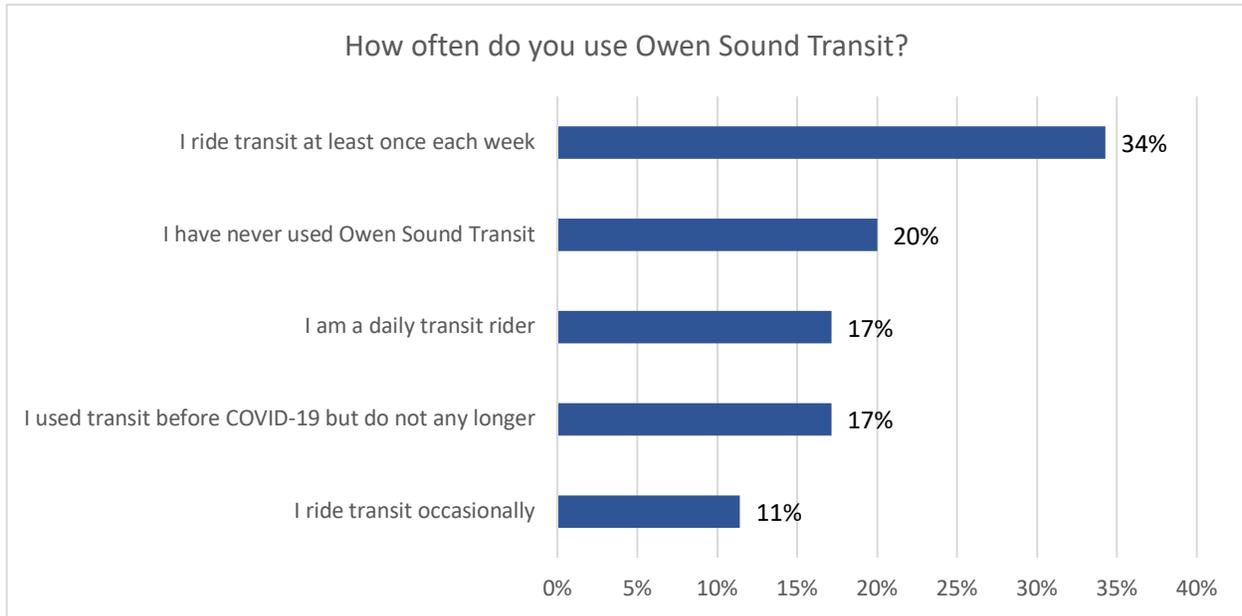


Figure 1 – Participants’ response to “How often do you use Owen Sound Transit?” (n = 35)

When participants are not using transit, almost one-quarter indicated choosing to drive instead (24 percent). A few would walk or bike to their destination (15 percent), take a cab (12 percent), or get a ride with someone else (3 percent). Nearly half of the participants (45 percent) would use a combination of all the travel methods mentioned (Figure 2).

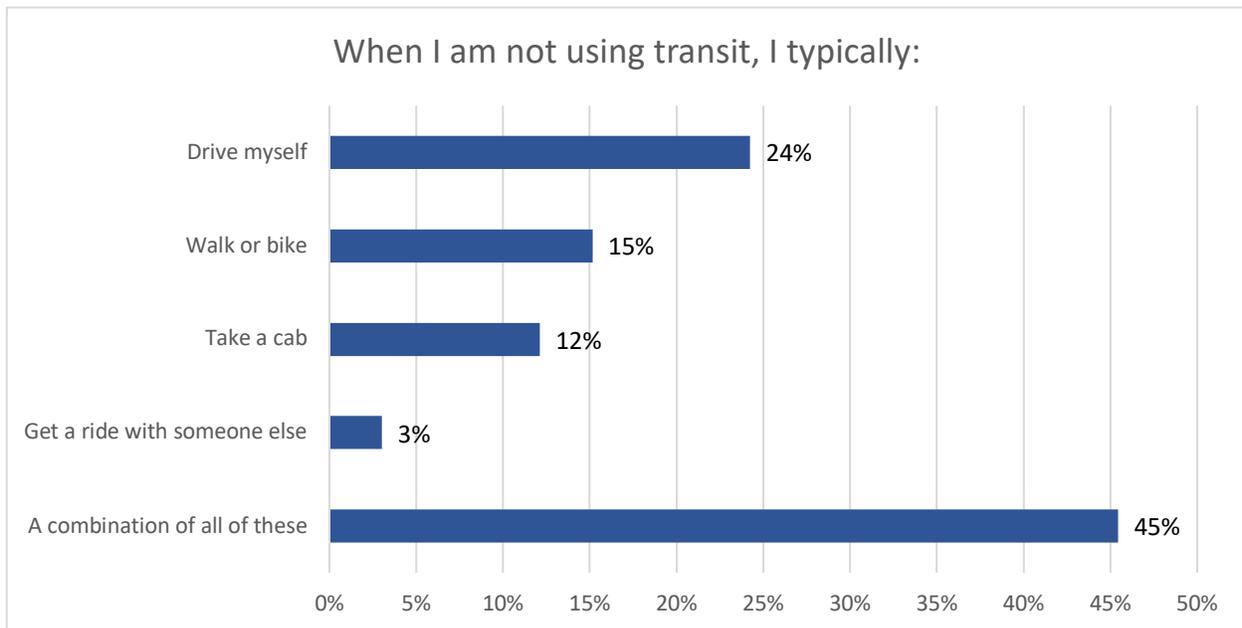


Figure 2 – Participants’ response to “When I am not using transit” (n=33)

When asked how they typically pay for transit (Figure 3), many participants said they use cash fare (59 percent). Some of them would use a monthly pass (18 percent). Some participants prefer other payment

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

methods (12 percent). These other methods include buying five tickets at a time or purchasing tickets at the transit terminal beforehand. Another 12 percent stated that they do not use transit.

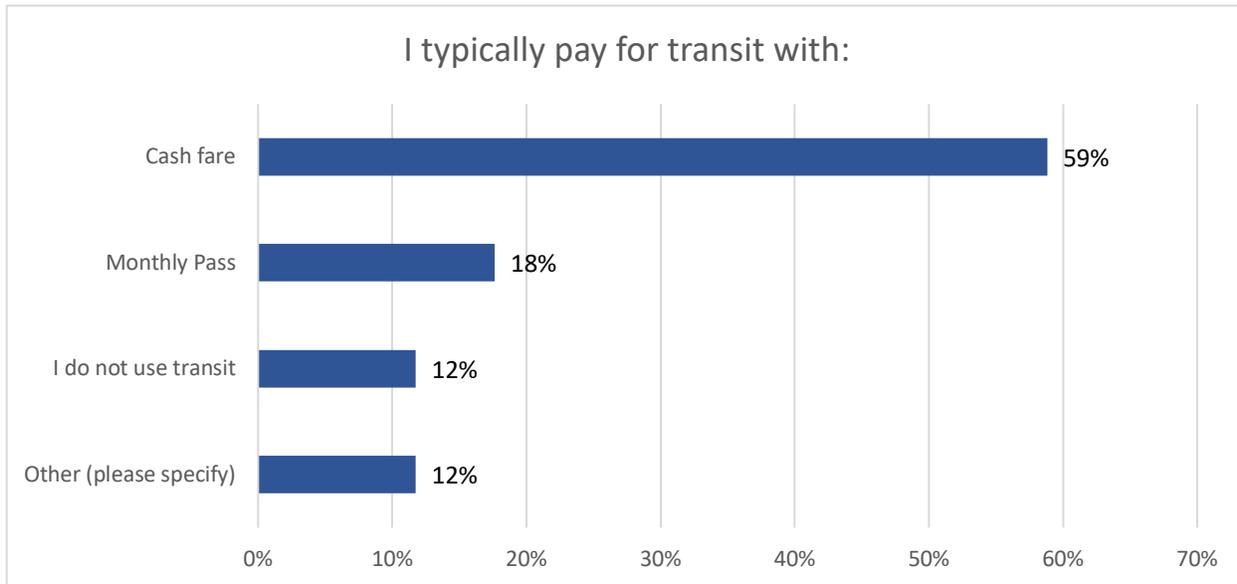


Figure 3 - Participants' response to "I typically pay for transit with" (n=34)

The questionnaire participants were asked to identify their age group (Figure 4). Most participants are middle-aged adults between the ages of 35 to 54 years old (40 percent). There are also many older adults and seniors between the ages of 55 to 65 years old and above (37 percent). Younger adults between 18 to 34 years old represent around 20 percent of the questionnaire participants.

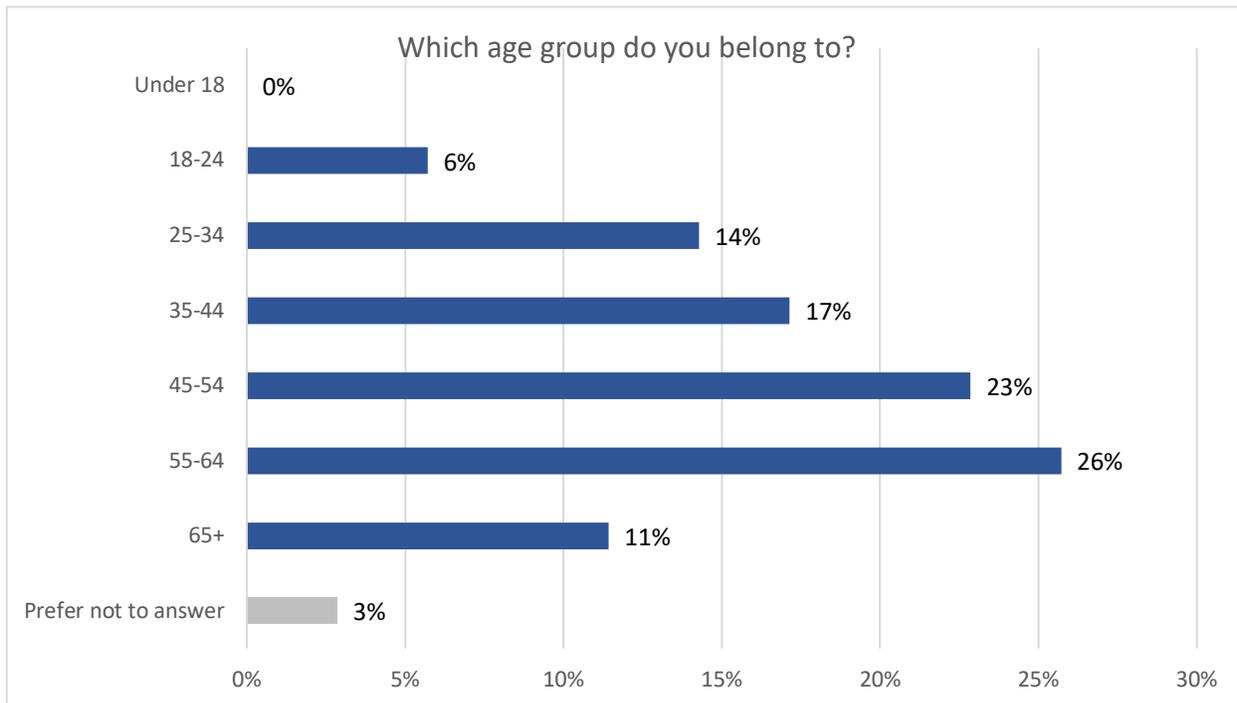


Figure 4 - Participants' response to "Which age group do you belong to" (n=35)

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

The questionnaire participants were also asked about their gender identity (*Figure 5*). The majority of the participants identify as female (63 percent), and many identify as male (31 percent).

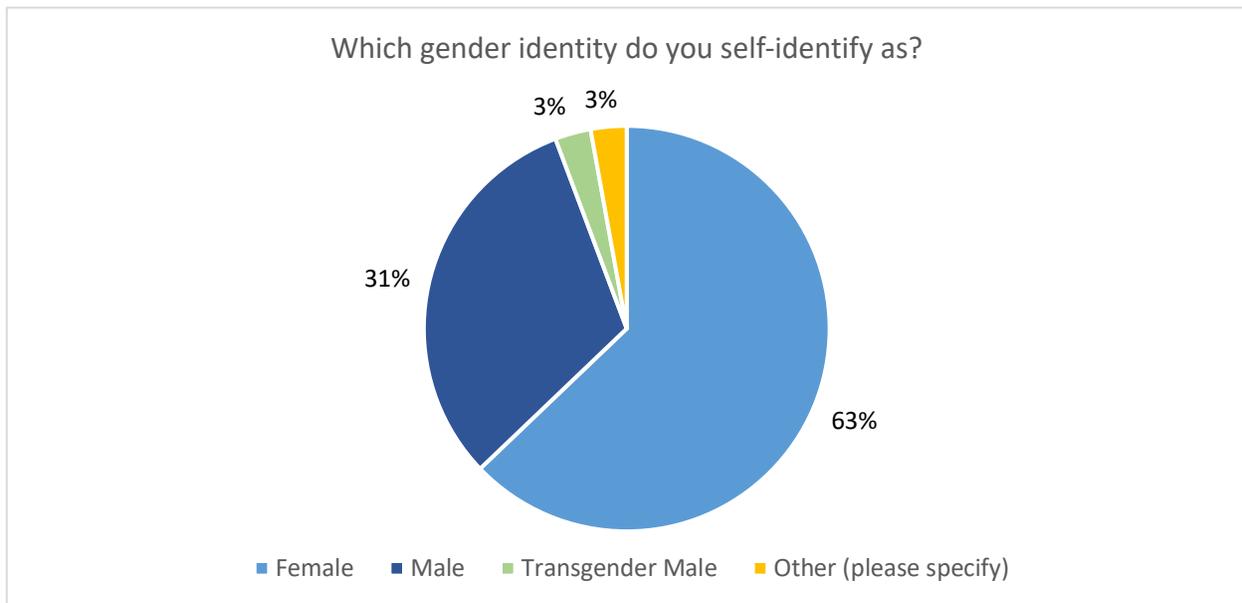


Figure 5 - Participants' response to "Which gender identity do you self-identify as" (n=35)

Feedback on Fixed Route Transit Options

Virtual Stakeholder and Public Engagement sessions participants were consulted on the Fixed Route Transit Options after presenting all the proposed services. Highlights of feedback are provided below. Participants felt that:

- The extension to the hospital is great since people now have a choice between two options.
- The 40-minute interval per bus may become an issue after service implementation.

Participants also asked the following clarifying questions:

- Is the plan to maintain the same level of service twelve months a year?
 - Yes, the plan is to maintain the same level of services twelve months a year. However, there is currently no good seasonal data to evaluate the fluctuation in ridership. There could be a seasonal increase or reduction of services as time passes.
- Is the transit data affected by the pandemic?
 - The data shown in this study was collected in April 2019, which is pre-pandemic.

Fixed Route Transit Option 1

Questionnaire participants were provided with a detailed map and text description of the "Fixed Route Transit Option 1". This option is designed to achieve more direct trips between key points in the City while tailoring service levels more closely to current demand. It is also designed to provide transfer-free rides and more frequent trips between major origins and destinations. It provides more frequent service and more direct trips to high ridership areas while reducing service in lower ridership areas.

Participants were asked the question, "Option 1 provides a transfer-free trip between the Brooke route and the Mall, hospital, and Walmart area. How useful is this to you?" (*Figure 6*). Nearly half of the

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

participants consider this trip “*Very useful*” (38 percent) or “*somewhat useful*” (8 percent). Another 33 percent felt that it is a “*Good idea but not useful to me personally*”. Another 21 percent felt that it is a “*Not useful*”.

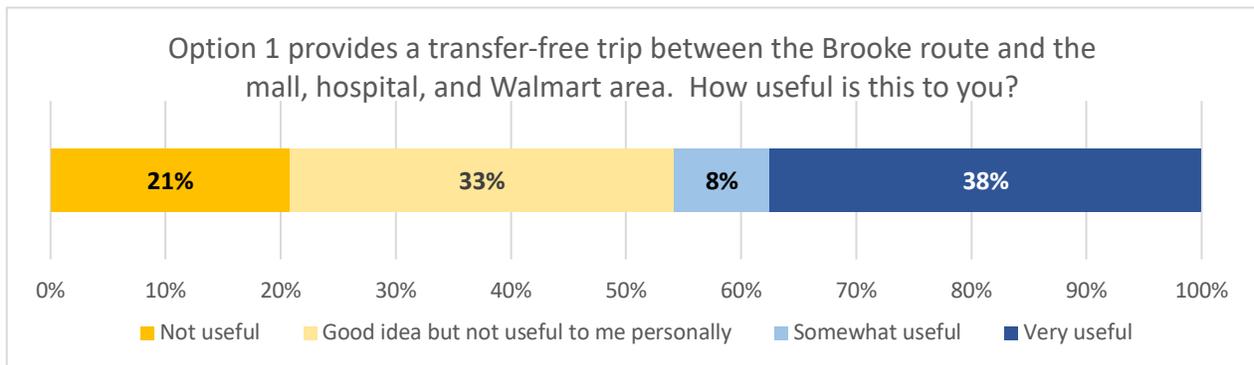


Figure 6 - Participants’ response to “Option 1 provides a transfer-free trip between the Brook route and the mall, hospital, and Walmart area. How useful is this to you?” (n=24)

When asked about what other areas in Owen Sound they think need more frequent transit service, participants provided the following additional locations:

- High Schools
- No Frills (on the west side)
- Galaxy Cinemas
- Harrison Park

Participants were provided with the opportunity to submit any comments or suggestions regarding Fixed Route Transit Option 1. The feedback received is summarized below.

- Participants felt that a connection with GO transit would be helpful.
- There was a suggestion to reconsider certain areas, which are proposed for 40-minute service. For example, some areas would no longer allow direct access to 16th Street. This would create an inconvenience for local residents as it would extend their usual transit time.
- Some participants do not agree with the transit system going into Georgian bluffs.
 - The extension of services would be spending local community tax dollars to support businesses outside of the Owen Sound district. Any service outside the City should only be done if the adjacent municipality pays for this service.
- Currently, services are often not on time, with either being too early to running late. There is already a 50 percent failure rate on a half-hour route. Bus schedules should be maintained.
- Suggestion to combine the Green and Blue hybrid routes to Harrison Park, so it is a permanent route. This would give a north/south corridor of routes which is currently missing.
- Many Owen Sound residents want access to Harrison Park during daytime hours and weekends but cannot afford a taxi to enjoy the park.
 - The current bus stop at the park entrance is not accessible for people with mobility difficulties, so a bus stop within the park is encouraged.

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

Fixed Route Transit Option 2

Questionnaire participants were provided with a detailed map and text description of “Fixed-Route Transit Option 2”. It is designed to provide some of the same advantages as Option 1 but at a reduced cost. The routes in Option 2 are the same as in Option 1.

Participants were asked the question, “The savings from these changes would be sufficient to fund different options for the community. Please rank the importance of each from 1 (very important) to 5 (not at all important)” (Figure 7).

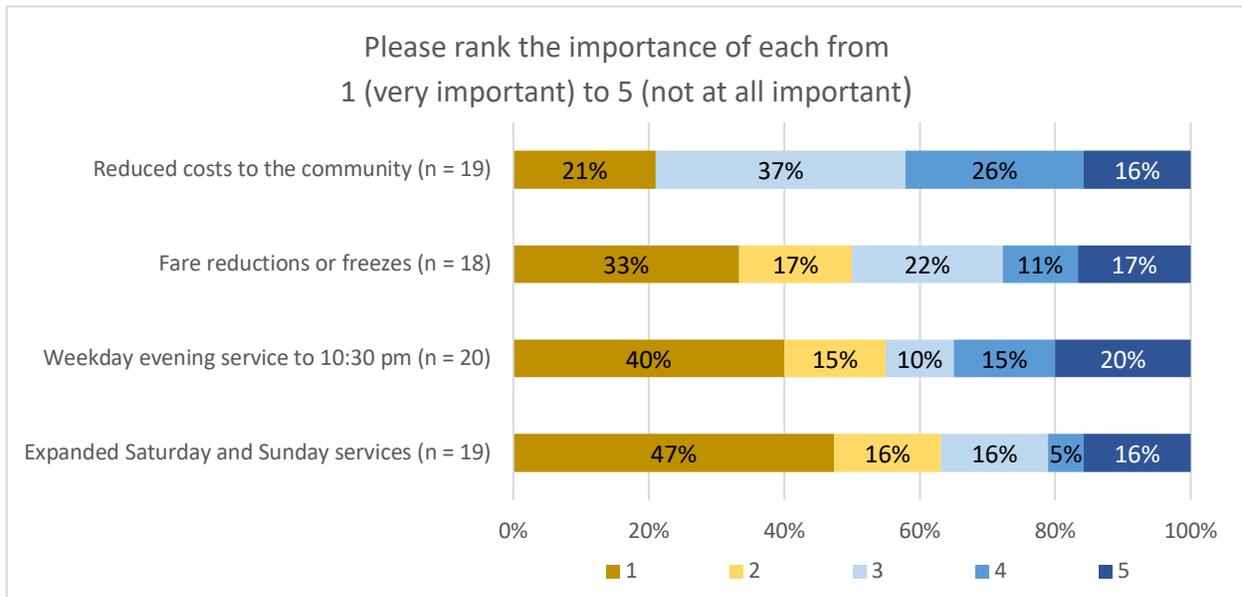


Figure 7 - Participants’ response to “The savings from these changes would be sufficient to fund different options for the community. Please rank the importance of each from 1 to 5.”

Out of the options provided, participants felt more strongly towards “Reduced costs to the community”, with a weighted average of 3.16, and 79 percent of the participants ranking it 4 or 5. The second option that participants chose to be relatively important is “Fare reductions or freezes”, with a weighted average of 2.61, and 50 percent that ranking it between 4 and 5. Then it is followed by “Weekday evening service to 10:30 pm”, with a weighted average of 2.60, and 45 percent ranking it 4 or 5. Participants felt least strongly towards “Expanded Saturday service and Sunday service”, with a weighted average of 2.26, and 37 percent ranking it 4 or 5.

Participants were provided with the opportunity to submit any comments or suggestions regarding Fixed Route Transit Option 2. The feedback received is summarized below.

- One participant indicated that there need to be more buses as there are too many hills to walk.
- Combine the Green and Blue routes to form a loop of service.
- The current transit is good, and any additional funds saved should go to non-transit projects or services.
- Expand daily services, extend Saturday hours, and add Sunday services.
- Ensure the Harrison Park route is available on weekends and evenings when special events occur within the park, such as Summer Folk and the Festival of Lights.

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

- Consider ending evening service to 11 pm, as some residents work until late at night, even on Saturdays and Sundays.

Feedback on Fixed Route Evening and Weekend Service

Virtual Stakeholder and Public Engagement sessions participants were consulted on the Fixed Route Evening and Weekend Service Options. Their feedback is summarized below:

- There should be Sunday and evening service, even if not as frequent as during the week and daytime. However, the cost may determine these additional services are feasible.
- Saturday service could start at 8 am, or 9 am and go later into the early evening or until 9:30 pm.
- For the new Sunday service, 9 am would be good to start and go until 4 o'clock.

Questionnaire participants were provided with a detailed explanation of potential fixed-route evening and weekend services. The proposed evening services could be provided in combination with either Fixed Route Option 1 or Option 2. In the case of Option 1, evening or weekend service would be an additional cost. For Option 2, evening and weekend service could be achieved from the savings from reduced service levels.

Participants were asked the question *Service currently ends with the last departures from the terminal at 6 pm, with service ending at 6:30 pm. Based on Option 1 or Option 2, the last departures would be 6:10, ending at 6:30. What is the earliest that any extended service should end to be useful to you?* (Figure 8). Nearly one-third (32 percent) of participants stated that they “would not use evening service”. In comparison, another 32 percent also hoped to extend services to “10:00 pm or later”. Around 26 percent chose “9:00 pm departures from the terminal, ending at 9:20 pm”, and the remaining 11 percent chose “8:00 pm departures from the terminal, ending at 8:20 pm”.

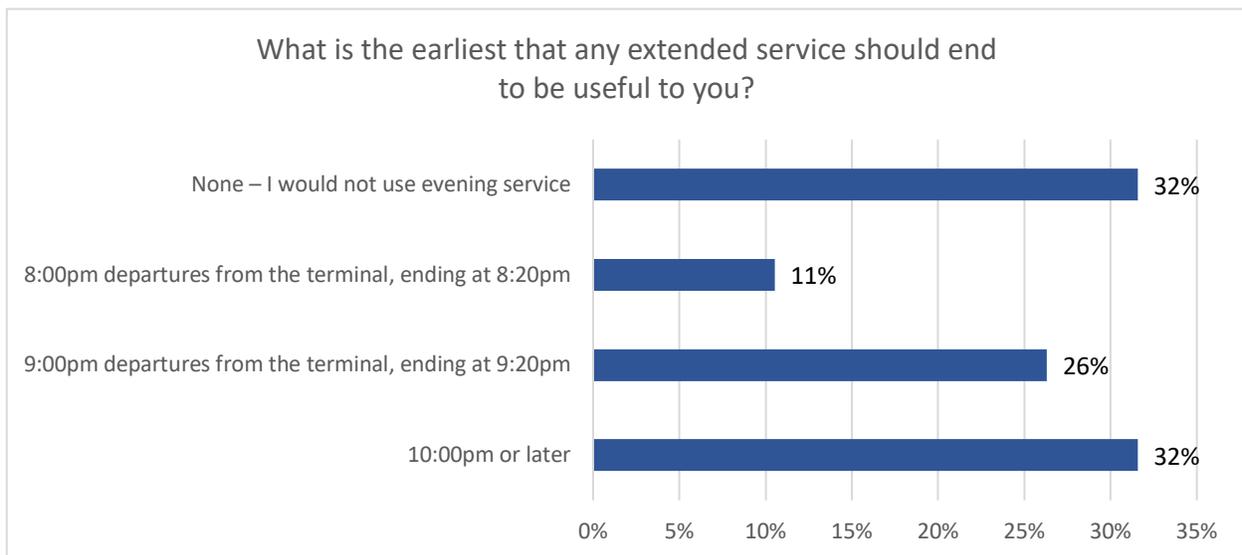


Figure 8 - Participants' response to "What is the earliest that any extended service should end to be useful to you?" (n=19)

Participants were asked the question, "If extended hours were to be provided on Saturdays, what is the earliest that any extended service should end to be useful to you?" (Figure 9). Twenty-nine percent of the participants chose "8:00 pm departures from the terminal, ending at 8:20 pm", followed by 24 percent

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

who chose “10:00 pm or later”. Around 19 percent of the participants expressed that they “Do not use the service on weekends”, and 14 percent thought that Saturday extended service should end at “6:00 pm – same as current weekday, but no additional evening service”. Ten percent chose “9:00 pm departures from the terminal, ending at 9:20 pm”.

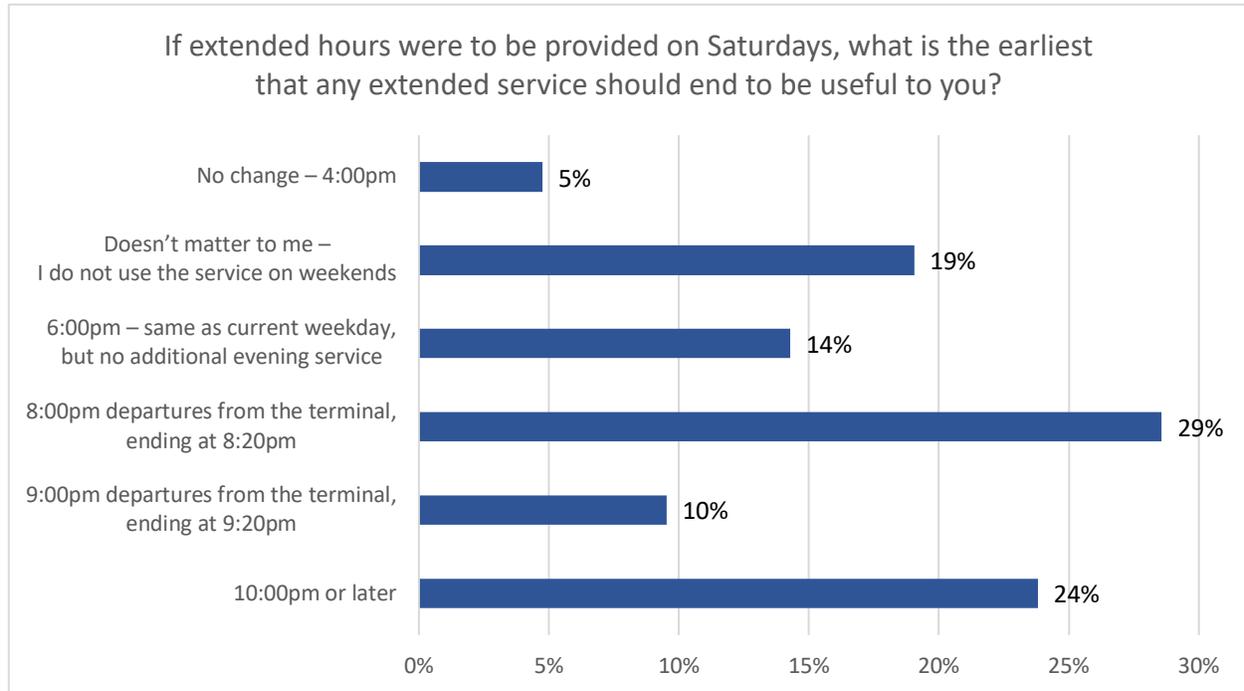


Figure 9- Participants' response to “What is the earliest that any extended service should end to be useful to you?” (n=21)

Participants were asked the question, “There is currently no service on Sundays or holidays. If service was to be provided on Sundays and holidays, what should the morning start time be?” (Figure 10). The “9:00 am” start time is the most popular, with 43 percent of the participants that chose this option. Around 19 percent of the participants said that they “Do not use the service on weekends”.

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.
Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

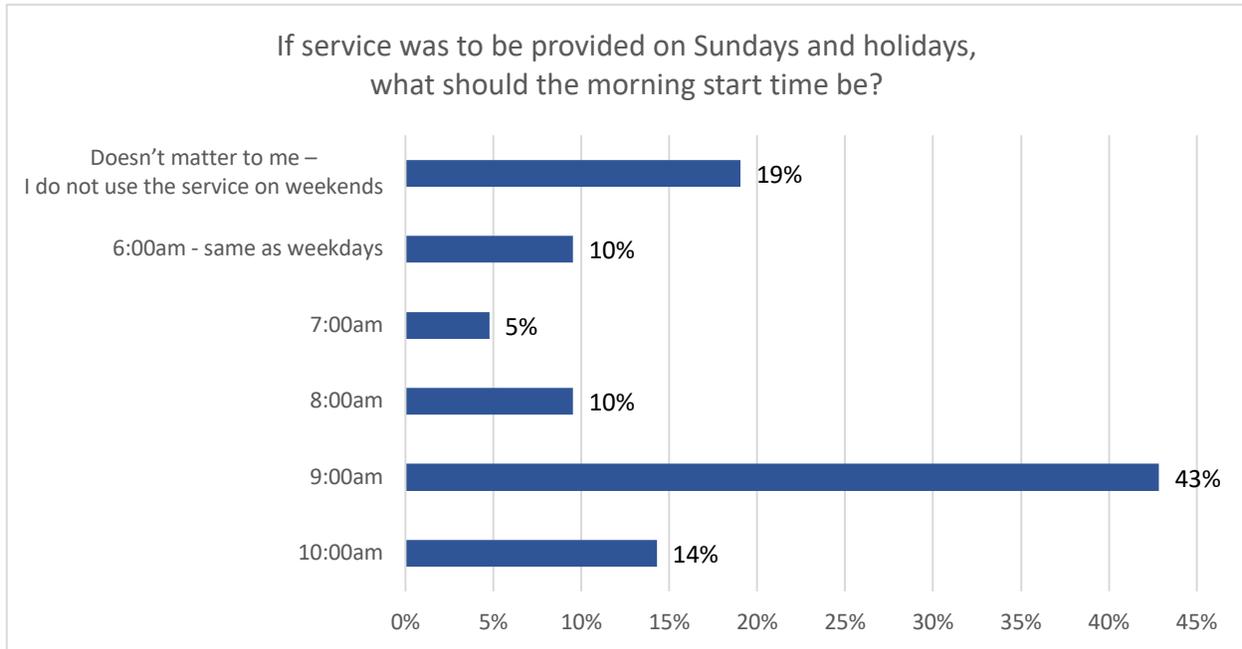


Figure 10 - Participants' response to "If service was to be provided on Sundays and holidays, what should the morning start time be?" (n=21)

Participants were asked the question, "If service was to be provided on Sundays and holidays, what should the service finish time be?" (Figure 11). Half of the participants suggested the service finish time should be "4:00 pm – same as Saturday". Twenty-five percent expressed that they "Do not use the service on weekends," and another one-quarter thought that Saturday extended service should end "Later than 4 pm".



Figure 11 - Participants' response to "If service was to be provided on Sundays and holidays, what should the service finish time be?" (n=20)

Participants were provided with the opportunity to submit any comments or suggestions regarding potential fixed-route evening and weekend services. The feedback received is summarized below.

- The City is very quiet and not active during Sundays, so Sunday services are not necessary. There should be evidence to support the need for extended hours and weekend services.

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

- Most people who use the bus before and after work would need the current Brooke and Bayshore routes extended.
- Some Churches provide buses for people to and from the Church for free.
- Options should be made available for route and timing alterations to accommodate special events within the City, such as evening hours to Harrison Park during the Festival of Lights.
- Proposed extended services should work with retail hours as many young people who work at retail outlets have no other way to go home.

Feedback on On-Demand Transit Options

Virtual Stakeholder and Public Engagement sessions participants were consulted on the On-demand Transit services after presenting all the proposed options. Highlights of their feedback are provided below:

- The proposed on-demand service options are confusing to understand; however, some participants favoured the hybrid model.
- Some participants were concerned and nervous about this new service since many seniors do not have smartphones or go online often.
- Many participants would also prefer to have the 'old school' options such as face-to-face booking or telephone booking.
- Accessibility and inclusiveness of on-demand service should be a priority consideration. Sometimes even normal phone lines may not be accessible for low-income individuals.
- Participants indicated a need to be prepared to address on-demand surges during on/off-work hours and on/off school hours.
- Consider how to introduce on-demand services in a way that is accessible to everybody.
- Participants liked that on-demand service can encourage people to participate in community events out of normal transit hours.

Participants also posed the following questions:

- Will there be enough on-demand ridership to make it feasible?
 - It is difficult to predict now, but the project team will learn from the experiences of other cities that are currently using an on-demand system.
- If there is an on-demand service, how far would somebody have to walk to use the service?
 - This would be a future design input to determine the distance.
 - It could, for example, be set as no more than a 5-minute walk to every request.
 - On-demand service is very flexible, but a later discussion would be how much flexibility can be built into the system.

On-demand Services General Description

Questionnaire participants were provided with a general description of how on-demand services would work in Owen Sound. On-demand services provide dynamically scheduled trips based on pre-bookings. Trips can be booked in advance or at the time of the trip, and services can be tailored and adjusted to meet various demand conditions.

Participants were asked the question, *"On-demand service works best and is most convenient for the customer when trips are booked with a smartphone app but can also be booked via the internet or by*

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

phone. Please select the statement that would most apply to your use of on-demand service” (Figure 12). Around 30 percent of the participants expressed that they “would not use an on-demand service”.

One quarter said they “would prefer to use a smartphone app”, 20 percent said they “would prefer to use a smartphone app, but would also use the internet or phone because they do not want to use their data plan for this purpose”, and 15 percent said they “would only be able to use the internet or phone”.

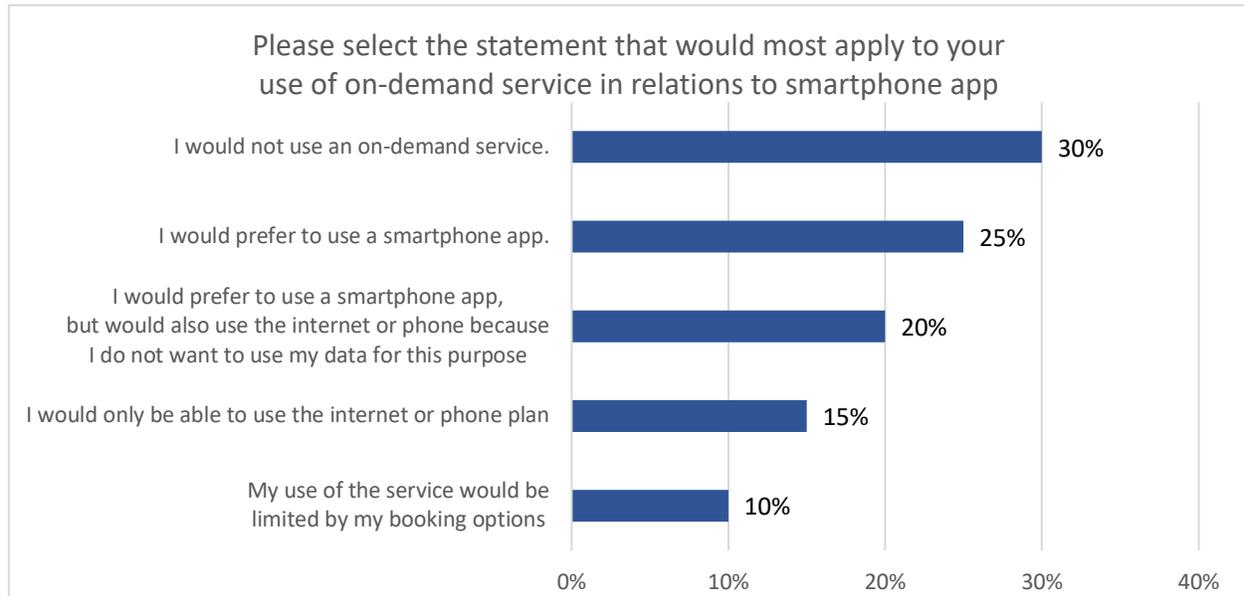


Figure 12 - Participants’ response to “Please select the statement that would most apply to your use of on-demand service in relation to a smartphone app.” (n=20)

On-demand Service Option A

Questionnaire participants were provided with a detailed map and text description of “On-demand Service Option A”. It is designed as a full on-demand system, with on-demand zones covering most of the service area. One fixed route is maintained to provide connections for higher-demand corridors. This option may only be suitable for late weekday evenings, Saturday evenings, or Sundays, subject to a more detailed implementation design of the system.

Participants were asked the question, “In On-demand Option A, you may get a direct (shared) ride on the on-demand vehicle, or you may be required to transfer to or from the fixed routes. Please select the statement that would most apply to your use of on-demand service.” (Figure 13). Around 47 percent of the participants expressed that they “are not interested in using any on-demand service”.

For the participants who are willing to use an on-demand service, 37 percent said they “would be willing to transfer to or from a fixed route only if it made their overall trip faster,” and 16 percent said they “would be willing to transfer to or from a fixed route if it helped make the overall system more efficient, even if it made their trip time a little longer”.

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.
Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

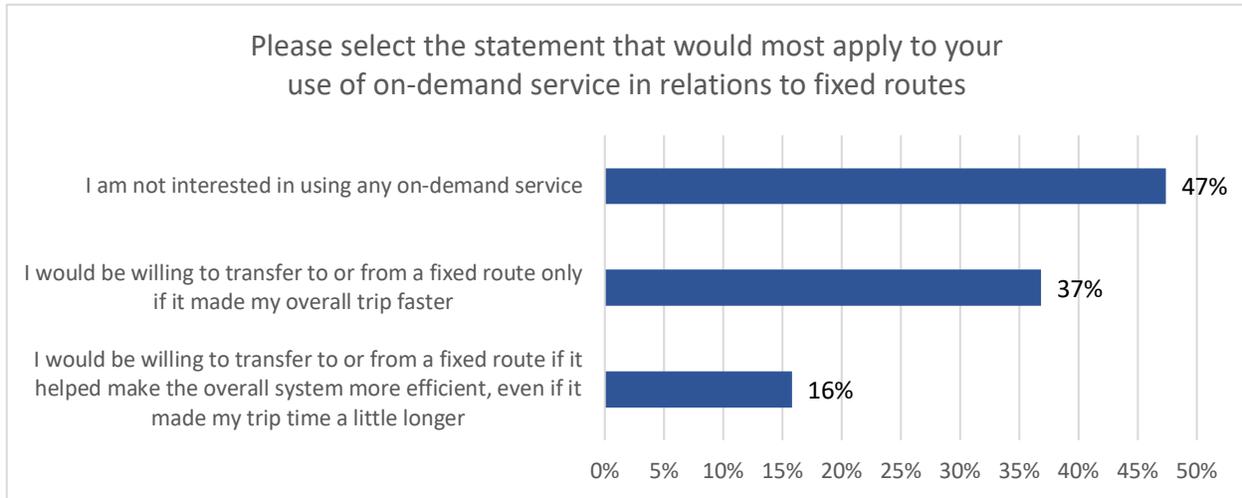


Figure 13 - Participants’ response to “Please select the statement that would most apply to your use of on-demand service in relation to fixed routes” (n=19)

Participants were asked the question, “In On-demand Option A, service could be provided to and from existing stops. Please select the statement that would most apply to your use of on-demand service.” (Figure 14). Half percent of the participants expressed that they “are not interested in using any on-demand service”. Another 50 percent said they “would be willing to walk to an existing stop if it helped make the overall system more efficient”.

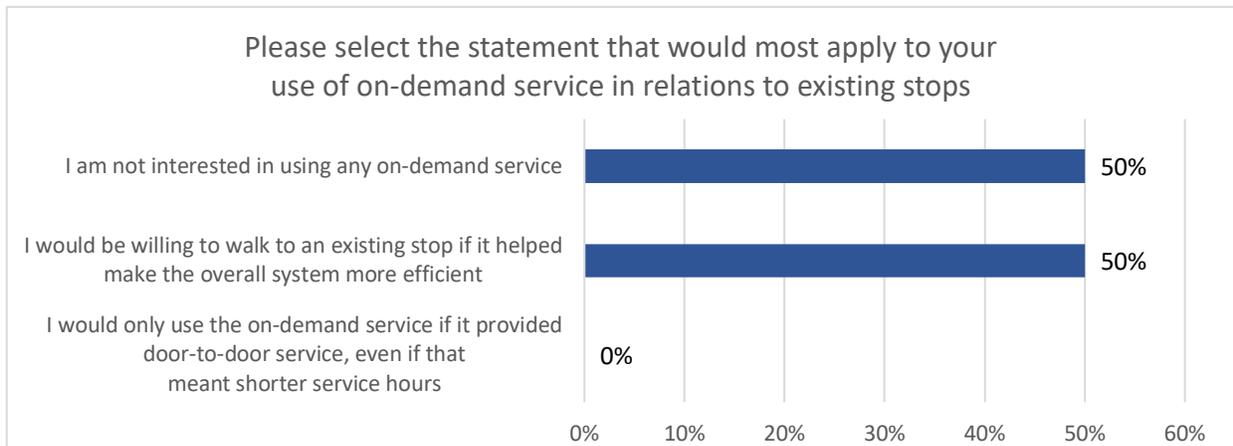


Figure 14 - Participants’ response to “Please select the statement that would most apply to your use of on-demand service in relation to existing stops” (n=18)

Participants were provided with the opportunity to submit any comments or suggestions regarding On-demand Service Option A. The feedback received is summarized below.

- When the service is every 0.5 hours, it is easier to know when a bus is coming; 40 minutes is inconvenient for calculating arrival time.
- Some participants do not agree with the on-demand service.
- Participants felt there should be more consideration for people who do not have a smartphone.
- Some participants felt that on-demand services are only desirable when all booking methods are accommodated, including smartphone apps, landline phones, and online bookings.

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

On-demand Service Option B

Questionnaire participants were provided with a detailed map and text description of “On-demand Service Option B”. It is designed as a hybrid system, with the on-demand area serving only the low-demand areas and potential new service in the northeast industrial area. It may be suitable for a weekday evening or weekend service.

Participants were asked the question, “*In On-demand option B, service could be provided to and from existing stops (new stops established in Zone 4). Please select the statement that would most apply to your use of on-demand service.*” (Figure 15). Around 53 percent of the participants expressed that they “*are not interested in using any on-demand service*”. Forty-seven percent said they “*would be willing to walk to an existing stop if it helped make the overall system more efficient*”. Zero percent said they “*would only use the on-demand service if it provided door-to-door service, even if that meant shorter service hours*”.

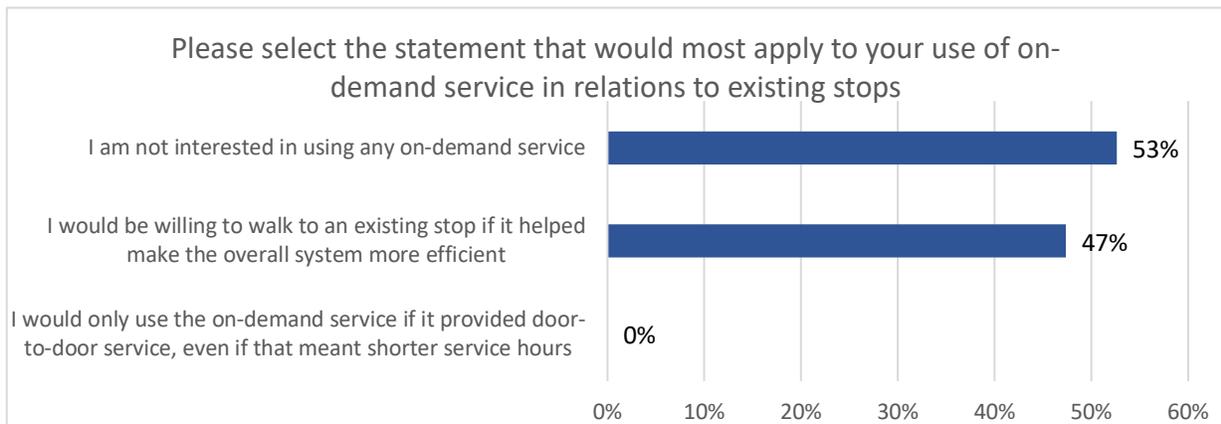


Figure 15 - Participants’ response to “Please select the statement that would most apply to your use of on-demand service in relation to existing stops” (n=19)

Participants were provided with the opportunity to submit any comments or suggestions regarding On-demand Service Option B. The feedback received is summarized below.

- A participant pointed out that the 5th bus has been very useful.
- One participant did not agree with the service going into Georgian bluffs.

Feedback on Bus Fares and Fleets

Virtual Stakeholder and Public Engagement sessions participants were consulted on bus fares and fleets. Their feedback is highlighted below:

- All buses in Owen Sound are quite easy to get on and off for wheelchair users but needs to be more accessible for mobility aids user. Current busses are very hard to board with walkers.
- Zero-Emission Vehicles will eventually be used everywhere due to climate change efforts, so the City should do what is most green and economically feasible to improve the fleets.
- Some participants do not find Zero-Emission Vehicles very important and have concerns about using new technology to combat climate change.
- Weekly passes are very helpful as it provides more buying options at a lower cost.

Bus fares

Questionnaire participants were provided with a detailed explanation regarding potential changes towards bus fares. Keeping transit affordable, both for the community and the rider, is an important

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

element of a sustainable transit service. This means a reasonable fare structure for the rider, which generates enough revenue to control community costs. Increasing ridership also increases revenue, so a service network that can increase ridership is an important part of the equation.

Participants were asked the question, “*Would you be able to use a smartphone-based mobile payment system? (i.e. do you own a smartphone and can you use data-based apps).*” (Figure 16). Around 41 percent of the participants answered “*Yes*”, while another 41 percent answered “*No*”, and 18 percent said “*Sometimes*”.

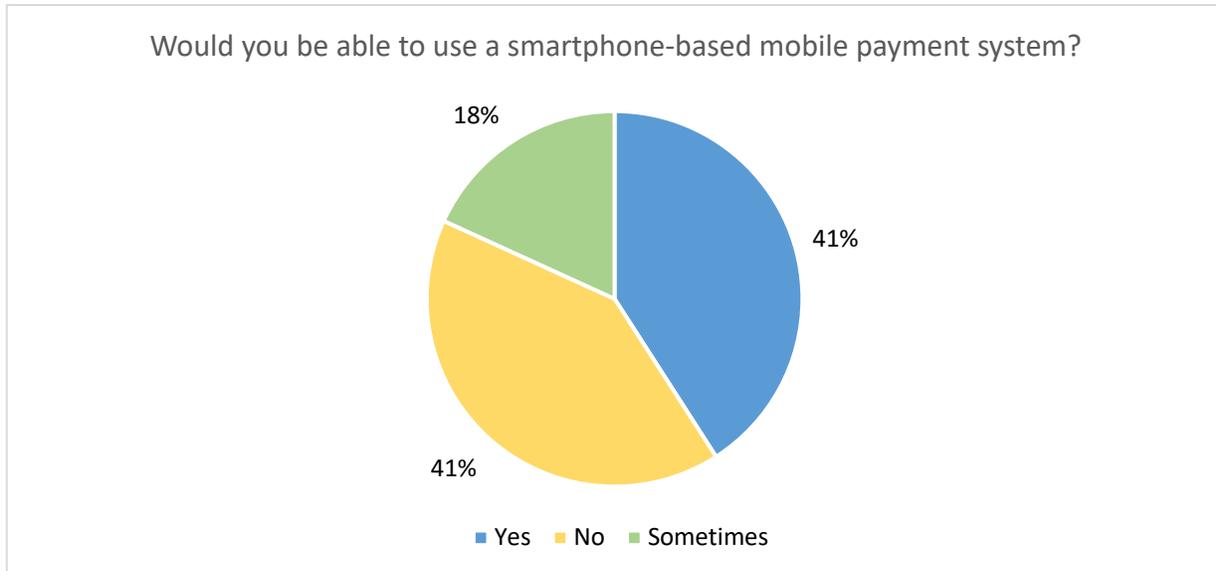


Figure 16 – Participants’ response to “*Would you be able to use a smartphone-based mobile payment system?*” (n = 22)

Participants were asked the question, “*Would you buy a weekly pass that would be good for unlimited rides in one week?*” (Figure 17). Around 33 percent of the participants answered “*Yes*”, and 24 percent answered “*No*”. Another one-third of the participants chose “*Sometimes*”.

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.
 Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

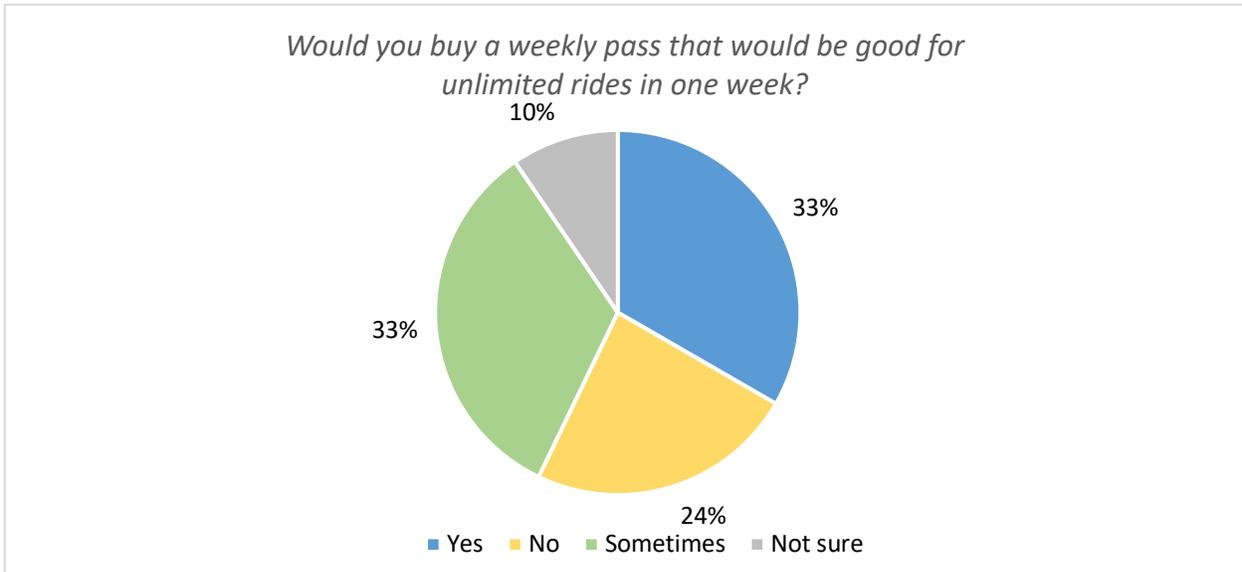


Figure 17 - Participants' response to "Would you buy a weekly pass that would be good for unlimited rides in one week?" (n = 21)

Participants were asked the question, "The ability to buy a weekly pass would help you?" (Figure 18). Around 10 percent of the participants said that a weekly pass would help them "increase their use of transit", and another 10 percent said it would help them "Save their money". Close to half of the participants (43 percent) stated that it is a "Combination of the two", while 38 percent expressed that a weekly pass "Makes no difference to them".

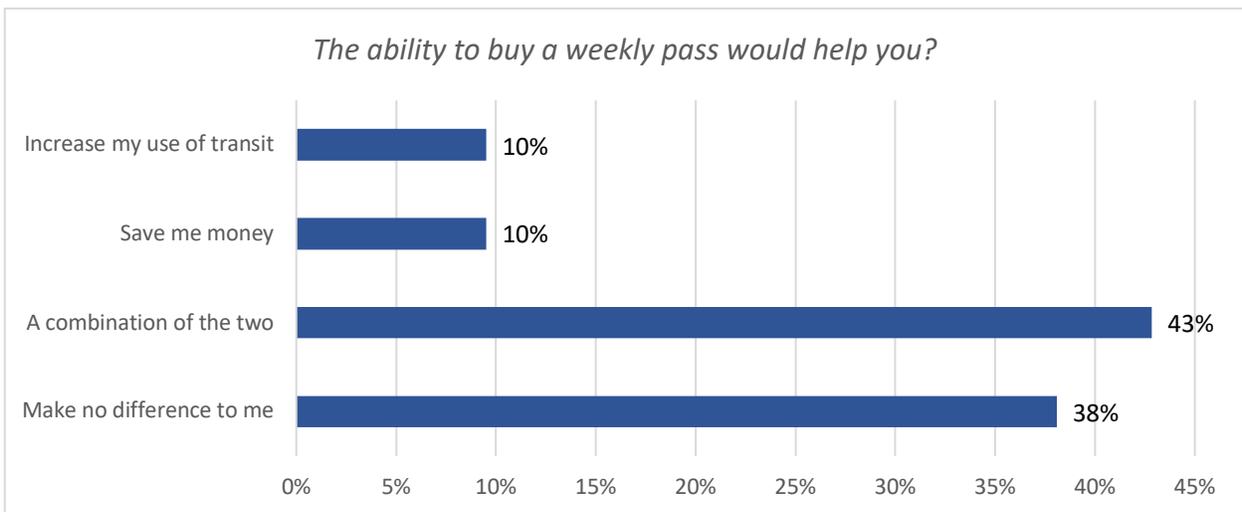


Figure 18 - Participants' response to "The ability to buy a weekly pass would help you?" (n = 21)

Participants were provided with the opportunity to submit any comments or suggestions regarding bus fares. The feedback received is summarized below.

- Many people will buy a weekly pass depending on the price only. They expect it to be less than the current single ticket cost of \$3. Since most rides and distances are short, it is hard to justify tickets at or above big city prices.

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

- A weekly pass with unlimited rides would be appealing if the expense is cheaper than using a monthly pass or purchasing individual ride tickets.
- There should be considerations of tickets good for a specific time (e.g., \$3 ticket is good for 60 minutes) or other transfer points at most used locations. It is frustrating that the only transfer is at the terminal.
- Participants do not wish to see an increase in bus fares to alleviate app costs.
- Suggest finding crowdfunding options as many who use the bus are of low income.

Bus Fleets

Questionnaire participants were provided with a detailed explanation regarding potential changes towards bus fleets. The current Owen Sound fleet is at the limit of its usable life and needs to be replaced. This represents an opportunity to improve the fleet, provide more flexible options tailored to the service recommendations, introduce new technology and take advantage of financial assistance programs.

Participants were asked the question, “How important do you feel it is for Owen Sound Transit vehicles (of any type) to be as close to Zero-emission vehicles as possible?” (Figure 19). Thirty percent of the participants stated that it is “Very important”. Another 25 percent also expressed that it is “Very important, but the added cost must be supported by the Province or Federal government”.

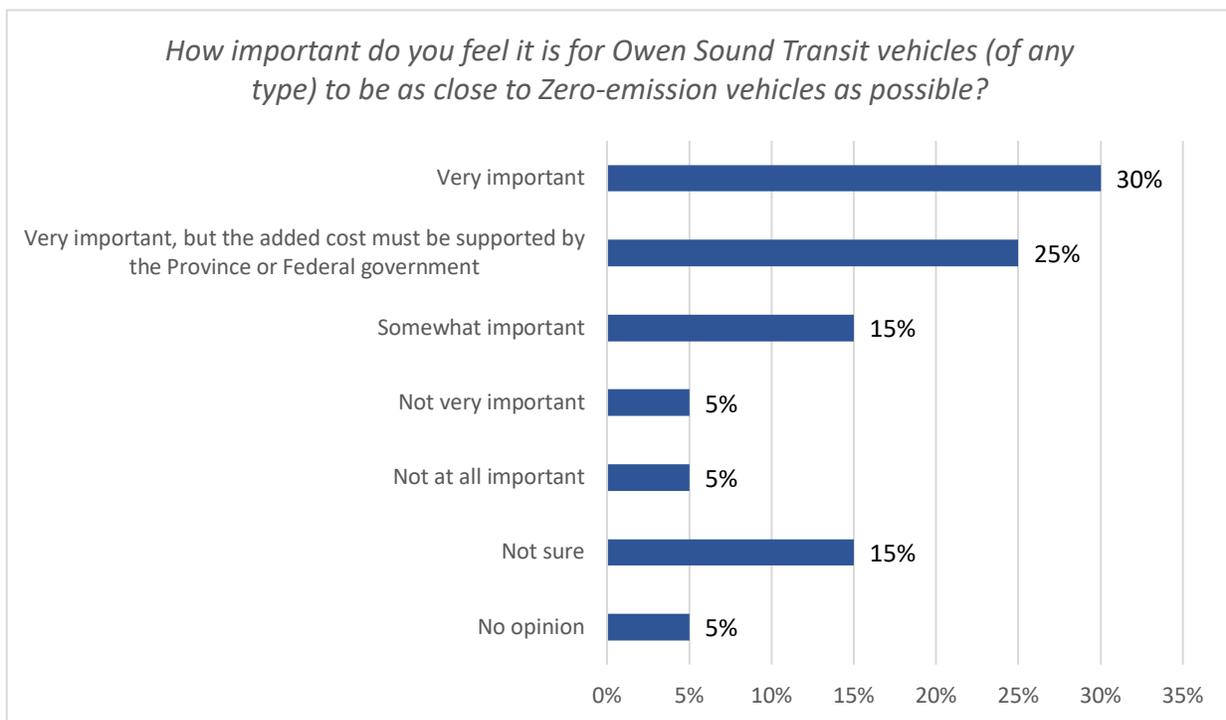


Figure 19 – Participants’ response to “How important do you feel it is for Owen Sound Transit vehicles (of any type) to be as close to Zero-emission vehicles as possible?” (n = 20)

Participants were asked the question, “Do you have any concerns about Owen Sound Transit using zero-emission vehicles?” (Figure 20). Thirty percent of the participants have no concerns. Around 15 percent

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

of the participants are either concerned about the “cost” or “reliability”. One-quarter of the participants expressed that they are “Not sure”.

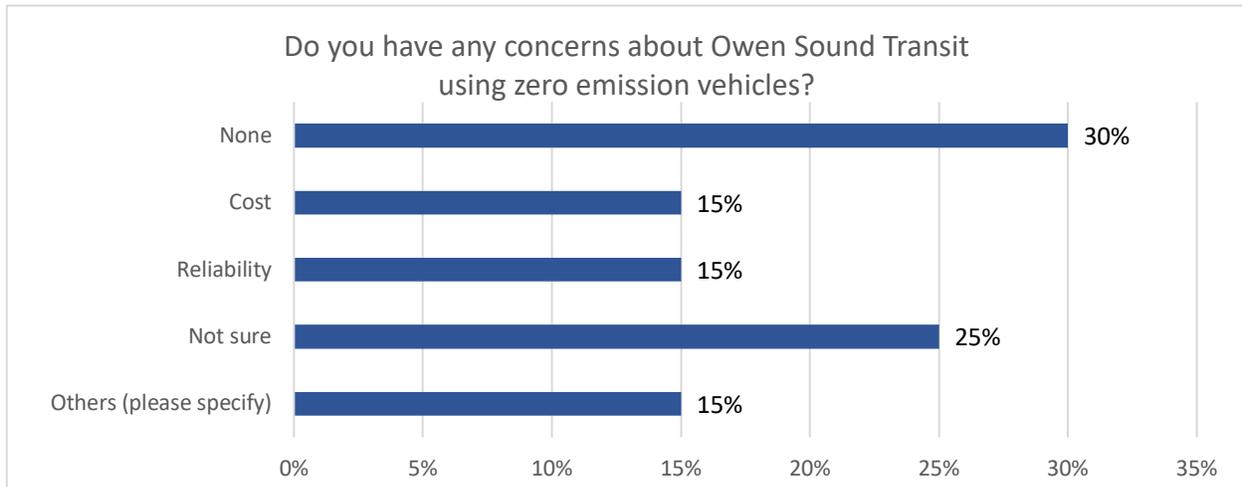


Figure 20 – Participants’ response to “Do you have any concerns about using zero-emission vehicles?” (n = 20)

Participants were asked the question, “Do you feel that Owen Sound should spend additional funds to improve the quality and comfort of the transit vehicle?” (Figure 21). Around 29 percent of the participants said “Yes”, with another 11 percent that said, “Yes, but only if other government funding is available”. Fourteen percent of the participants stated “No”.

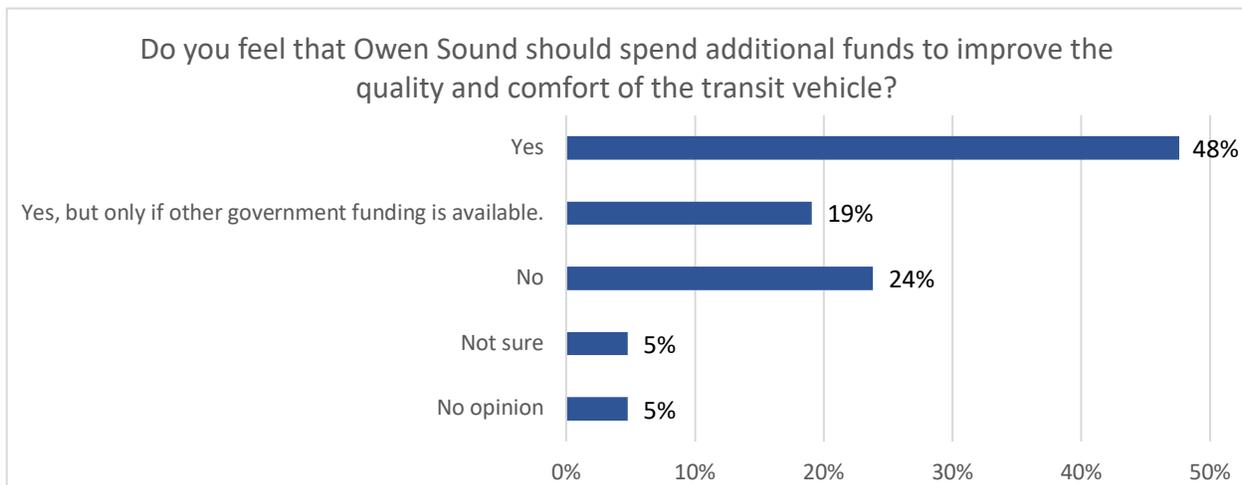


Figure 21 – Participants’ response to “Do you feel that Owen Sound should spend additional funds to improve the quality and comfort of the transit vehicle?” (n = 21)

General Feedback for the City and Project Team

At the end of the questionnaire feedback form and the virtual Stakeholder and Public Engagement sessions, participants were provided with the opportunity to submit any comments or suggestions regarding any proposals. The feedback received is summarized below.

- Some participants stated that they prefer the hybrid model.

City of Owen Sound Transit Optimization Study.

Summary of Feedback: Round 2 Engagement

- Complaints about current bus fleets as they are very uncomfortable to ride on and have potential safety issues. They are not well maintained and need to be cleaned regularly.
- Wintertime bus stops are not very accessible. The City often prioritize road over bus stops but should look into improve this as transit is essential for many people with mobility difficulties.
- Intersection and sidewalk upgrades would be necessary to enhance transit accessibility and neighbourhood walkability in the winter.
- Some participants questioned the need for transit improvements. They are quite satisfied with the current model and do not wish to see the City spend money on additional transit services.
- Suggestions on adding more payment options such as debit cards and a scanning system for bus passes that could help with bus transfers.
- A smartphone app with arrival times at stops can be a good idea. The City of Guelph has something similar implemented a few years ago.
- Some participants expressed frustration towards the proposed transit options as they are confusing to understand. The complex descriptions made it difficult for them to answer the questionnaire and is discouraging for seniors. Many may have lost interest due to confusion about the problems and how they can be solved.
- Some participants raised concerns regarding the drivers, saying they are rude and disrespectful towards transit riders.
- Bus services are sometimes cancelled without notice which is frustrating for transit riders. The buses should be on a proper reliable schedule where no stops are missed.
- The conventional transit system should remain and be enhanced for better accessibility.
- Extension of the service beyond Owen Sound's municipal boundary is difficult to support if they come at a cost to local taxpayers. The system is important to the community, but there is a limit to what people can afford.
- While some participants did not wish to see the City spending extra funds to improve transit, others do think it is very important for the City to invest in improving transit and make it better.
- It is important to think critically about getting people out of cars and into the transit system.
- Transit is an essential service for many people in Owen Sound, including fixed-income and low-income individuals or families.
- An on-demand system should be studied carefully before any implementation.
- Transit in Owen Sound should meet people where they are at.