

New bi-weekly transit service in Wollaston

By Jim Eadie

As of June 10 there was a new way to get to Bancroft from Wollaston Township.

Thanks to a partnership between the Township of Wollaston Council and Bancroft Community Transit (BCT), new public transit will depart from the Coe Hill Legion on the second and fourth Friday of each month. Beginning June 10, the BCT Community Transit van departs at 8:30 a.m. and returns to Coe Hill at 12:45 p.m. A ride is \$5.

The bus will drop riders off at selected locations such as TD Bank, No Frills, Home Hardware, Foodland or Canadian Tire, said Wollaston Township clerk Jennifer Cohen. While in Bancroft, riders will be able to access the TROUT Public Transit to shuttle to other locations within Bancroft.

Cohen noted that the municipality is open to suggestions for stops. It was felt that many potential riders did not want to spend the whole day away, so the half-day trip was suggested for now. Departure, pick-up options and times are open to discussion. The municipality is open to good ideas that work for everyone.

Director of Operations for BCT Gwen Coish was thrilled with the new municipal partnership.

This is a great fit with our program, said Coish. Our board has looked at this for quite some time. It fits with our strategic plan. We had envisioned something like this.

Recently, a similar community transit route was established by the Municipality of Hastings Highlands and BCT. Coish noted it is running smoothly.

We offer an efficient, affordable, comfortable service. Many people don't want to hang around all day to get a ride back home, said Coish. This may not work as well for people who want to go to work, but we can accommodate if that becomes the target market. For now, our target market is people who just need to get into town for necessities or appointments.

Anyone can use the community transit service, but they are not equipped for car seat installation.

Wollaston township will be paying \$75 each day that the transit vehicles run from the municipality. Rider fees will be deducted from the municipality's bill.

We get calls from people in Wollaston needing rides, Coish told Wollaston council in March when the idea was first floated.

One person trips are expensive, and this will be a cost effective and safe option for residents, she said. We have good vehicles, and amazing drivers. Five people can sit in our vans comfortably, and there is still lots of room for groceries.

BCT will be gathering data to provide to the municipality including numbers of riders, costs, and demographics.

That way we keep it simple, but customized around the true needs of the community, said Coish.