



## **STAFF REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**STAFF REPORT NO:** DSR-087-19

**DATE:** May 22, 2019

**To:** Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Members of Council

**From:** Tim Cane, Manager of Land Use Planning

**Subject:** Innisfil Transit – Pilot Program to Support Access to Innisfil Food Bank

---

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

To support access to the Innisfil Food Bank, Staff is recommending that up to \$1000 in Uber gift cards be provided directly to its users. During the implementation of this program, Staff will also continue to work with the Food Bank to better understand the transportation needs of its users, and how Innisfil Transit could be better structured to support access to this valuable social program along with others in Innisfil through a broader Transit Assistance Program.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the gift card pilot program to support access to the Innisfil Food Bank be approved as outlined in DSR-087-19;**  
**That Staff report back with considerations for a Town-wide Transit Assistance Program.**



## TOWN OF INNISFIL STAFF REPORT

**Staff Report No.:** DSR-087-19  
**Date:** May 22, 2019  
**To:** Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Tim Cane, Manager of Land Use Planning  
**Subject:** Innisfil Transit – Pilot Program to Support Access to Innisfil Food Bank  
**Cross Reference:** DSR-038-19; DSR-155-18; DSR-028-18; DSR-022-18; DSR-171-17; Aug. 9/17 Memo; DSR-042-17; DSR-079-16; DSR-143-15

---

### RECOMMENDATION:

**That the gift card pilot program to support access to the Innisfil Food Bank be approved as outlined in DSR-087-19; and**

**That Staff report back with considerations for a Town-wide Transit Assistance Program.**

### BACKGROUND:

Innisfil Transit, which includes the Town's partnerships with Uber (for general trips) and Barrie Taxi (for accessible trips), was launched on May 15, 2017. Thus far, there have been nearly 150,000 trips taken through the service, and survey results from both 2017 and 2018 show that residents have a high level of satisfaction with Innisfil Transit. Specifically, in 2018, 71% of all survey respondents that had taken at least one Innisfil Transit trip were either 'Satisfied' or 'Strongly Satisfied' with the service.

On March 13, 2019, Council received an update through DSR-038-19 on the 2018 results of the Innisfil Transit service as well as the results from the survey conducted in the Fall of 2018. Council also approved the fare changes (a \$1 increase for all trips as well as a monthly limit of 30 trips) that were proposed in this report to help ensure that Innisfil Transit remains on budget in 2019.

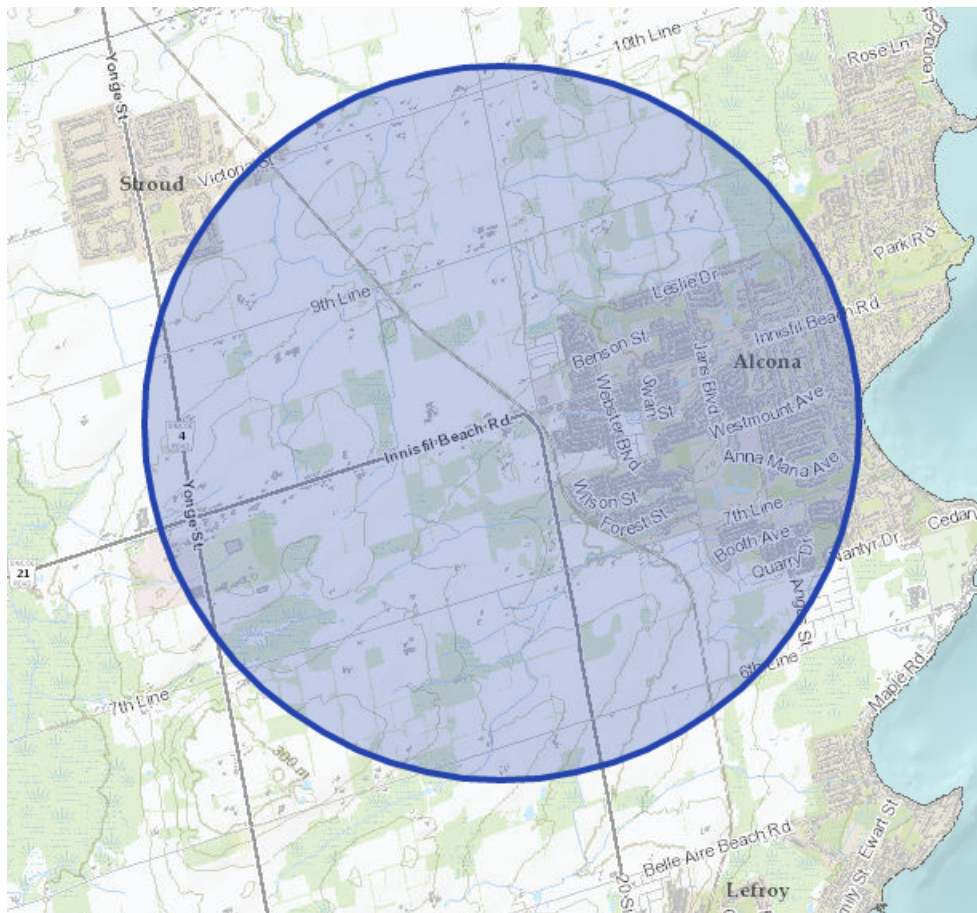
In consideration of DSR-038-19, Council also received a delegation from the Innisfil Community Church (ICC) requesting that it be added as a flat fee location as part of the Innisfil Transit service in order to support those accessing the social programs at the facility. The ICC is located at 1571 Innisfil Beach Road, which is just west of the Alcona settlement boundary, and as noted in the attached letter from the ICC, provides several community programs such as the Innisfil Food Bank, the Clothing Depot, and Alcoholics Anonymous. To support the needs of the community, the ICC notes that the Food Bank serves approximately 80 families per month and has provided over 1500 full sized bags of free clothing through the Clothing Depot over the past year. Though the ICC provides several social programs, Staff is recommending that the pilot program only be scoped to users of the Innisfil Food Bank to help inform the development of a broader Town-wide Transit Assistance Program.

In addressing the request from the ICC for it to be identified as a flat fee location, Council also passed the following resolution as part of their approval of DSR-038-19:

*“That Staff be directed to report back with options for subsidized transit to places that provide for social benefit to the Key Destination List.”*

The Innisfil Food Bank location can already be accessed using Innisfil Transit for a \$4, \$5 or \$6 cost from any of the flat fee locations (e.g. the Alcona Library, any GO bus stop along Yonge St, Lefroy Community Centre, etc.), or for a \$4 discount off the regular Uber fare from anywhere else in Innisfil (e.g. as shown on Figure 1 below, most trips from Alcona and portions of Stroud would cost approximately \$4-6). Because of this, there has already been a monthly average of about 40 Innisfil Transit trips going to and from the Innisfil Food Bank location.

**Figure 1: Map showing approximate radius from which Innisfil Transit trips would currently cost about \$4-6 to access the Innisfil Food Bank, based on \$4 discount off Uber X fare (Note: This map excludes \$4-6 cost from flat fee locations)**



The purpose of this Staff Report is to respond to the Council Resolution from March 13, 2019 and consider how Innisfil Transit can better support access to social programs like the Innisfil Food Bank. The results and findings of the program proposed in this report will also be used to inform the development of a broader Town-wide Transit Assistance Program that would provide greater discounts to other locations in Innisfil for students, seniors and low income households. During the implementation of the pilot program, Staff will also continue to work with the Food Bank to better understand the transportation needs of its users and how Innisfil Transit could be structured to better support access to this valuable social program along with others in Innisfil.

## **ANALYSIS/CONSIDERATION:**

### Gift Card Pilot Program to Support Access to Innisfil Food Bank

Staff are proposing that a gift card pilot program be implemented to support greater access using Innisfil Transit to get to the Innisfil Food Bank. Through this program, Staff is proposing that up to \$1000 in Uber gift cards be provided to distribute directly to users of the Innisfil Food Bank. Before the gift cards are distributed, Staff will work with the Food Bank to develop a tracking system for the usage of the gift cards. The purpose for this tracking will be to help Staff better understand the transportation needs of Innisfil Food Bank users and how Innisfil Transit could be structured to better support their needs as part of the potential implementation of a broader Transit Assistance Program (as described below).

### Town-wide Transit Assistance Program (TAP)

One of the main objectives of the Innisfil Transit service has been to provide a transportation option to those that need it most, particularly those that do not have a vehicle or driver's license, such as youth and seniors. Since these residents also tend to have lower incomes, the purpose for a Transit Assistance Program (TAP) would be to provide greater discounts for students, seniors and those from low income households to use Innisfil Transit. The program to support access to the Innisfil Food Bank will therefore help Staff with assessing ridership demand and to assess the feasibility and budget impact for the Town to implement a broader TAP.

Similar to how an application process is currently in place for residents to apply for an increase from the limit of 30 monthly Innisfil Transit trips to 50 (so far, 15 residents who depend on Innisfil Transit to get to and from school or their place of employment have been approved for this increase), an application form to determine eligibility for the TAP could be created. This application form would consider information such as household income and whether the individual already qualifies for the Ontario Works and/or Ontario Disability Support Payments (ODSP) programs administered by the Province.

This is the approach that several other transit agencies in Ontario have taken, in addition to providing discounts to households below the "Low Income Cut-off" (LICO) measure identified by Statistics Canada, which is defined as "the income below which a family is likely to spend 20 percentage points more of its income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family."

In the Innisfil context, the LICO for a 4-person household (in a municipality with a population size between 30,000 and 100,000 people) would be an annual household after-tax income below \$33,157. Since there was approximately 3.5% of the Town's population or about 1,285 individuals living below the LICO in Innisfil as of the 2016 Census, the Town's TAP program could therefore be structured to provide discounts to these low income households.

The report coming back to Council will have further considerations on the feasibility for potentially implementing a broader Town-wide Transit Assistance Program in Innisfil. Staff has already started work on this and anticipates this could potentially be in place this summer, as Uber is finalizing a voucher system that would give the Town the ability to set customized discounts for specific residents directly within the Uber app.

## **OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES:**

Council can adopt the recommendations of this report, or request that Staff make/consider additional changes.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION:**

In the 2019 budget, Council approved a total equivalent of \$885,806 for Innisfil Transit. Of this amount, \$260,806 is from the property tax levy, \$318,827 is from the Provincial Gas Tax program, while the remaining amount is from ARS and development charges. As noted in DSR-038-19 received by Council on March 13, 2019, one of the main purposes of the proposed fare changes was to find cost savings in the approximate amount of \$200,000 on an annual basis to help ensure that Innisfil Transit remains on budget in 2019.

A secondary purpose of the changes was to also try to leverage the potential cost savings to support the ability for the Town to provide greater discounts to places that provide social benefit such as the Innisfil Food Bank. However, since the fare changes took effect on April 1, the cost savings have been lower than anticipated, largely because of the number of residents that have been approved for an increase from the 30 trip limit. As such, the \$200,000-\$300,000 shortfall that Staff initially forecast in DSR-038-19 is not likely to be reduced significantly through the fare changes that took effect April 1. Because of this, Staff continues to explore other operational changes (e.g. staggered wait times, etc.) that can be implemented to find cost savings during the remainder of 2019.

In considering the original request from the Innisfil Community Church for the entire location to be identified as a flat fee destination, based on current ridership to the location along with a projected growth in ridership, Uber has estimated that this would amount to an additional cost to the Town of approximately \$1000 per month. Over the next 7 months for the remainder of 2019, this would result in a total budget impact of about \$7,000-\$10,000. Though this may be considered to be a relatively small budget impact, it still cannot be accommodated within the total amount for Innisfil Transit approved by Council for 2019.

Rather, in order to avoid the precedent that would be set by identifying the entire Innisfil Community Church as a flat fee location, Staff is instead recommending that for a significantly lower budget impact of \$1000, that a program to provide Uber gift cards directly to users of the Innisfil Food Bank be implemented. The cost for this pilot program is more likely to be absorbed within the overall Innisfil Transit budget. In the interim until a broader Town-wide Transit Assistance Program is considered, this will provide a higher level of support (e.g. free trips) directly to Food Bank users than what identifying the entire ICC as a flat fee location would have accomplished. The report coming back to Council will further consider the results of the gift card pilot program along with the potential budget impacts of a broader Town-wide Transit Assistance Program.

**CONCLUSION:**

To support access to the Innisfil Food Bank, Staff is recommending that up to \$1000 in Uber gift cards be provided directly to its users. During the implementation of this program, Staff will also continue to work with the Food Bank to better understand the transportation needs of its users, and how Innisfil Transit could be better structured to support access to this valuable social program along with others in Innisfil through a broader Transit Assistance Program.

**PREPARED BY:**

Paul Pentikainen, Senior Policy Planner

**APPROVED BY:**

Tim Cane, Manager of Land Use Planning

Attachments:

1. Letter from Innisfil Community Church – March 10, 2019

# INNISFIL COMMUNITY CHURCH

P.O. Box 7109 - Innisfil, Ontario - L9S 1A9

March 10, 2019

Town Of Innisfil,  
Innisfil, ON

Attention: Paul Pentikainen, Senior Policy Planner  
Tim Cane, Manager of Land Use Planning  
Jason Rayner, Chief Administrative Officer  
Members of Council

RE: STAFF REPORT NO: DSR-038-19 - Uber Designated Destinations

To Who it May Concern:

Some time ago we had an informal discussion with the C.A.O. and other staff concerning the desire to add The Life Center/Innisfil Community Church, 1571 Innisfil Beach Road, as a designated Uber destination within the municipality. We want to draw your attention to the fact that many of those included in the most vulnerable population of the town require access to the local **Innisfil Food Bank** which is located here. Currently we serve approximately 80 families per month. The **Clothing Depot**, also located here, provided over 1,500 full sized bags of free clothing to the community this past year.

There are numerous other programs and services offered on site. These programs include **recovery programs** that assist our community in maintaining a productive lifestyle. Programs such as **Al Anon** and **Alcoholics Anonymous** are critical assets to our community. Other programs like Toastmasters help develop our citizens and contribute to more effective functioning local businesses and agencies. The **kids programs** that provide cost effective programs for children and youth at this location can benefit by the services of Uber. And for others, The Life Center may serve as their only social connection. With the aging population, the Monday shuffleboard program may very well be enhanced by Uber allowing better access to this free community program for **seniors**.

Along side of these, our residents access help through our **Anger Management program** and our Walking Through **Grief program**. We also partner with the John Howard Society to assist their clients on premises.

Designating this location is one way, not to help us directly, but to help the residents of our community find accessible programs that serve their needs.

Please do not pass up this opportunity to include us in this round of negotiations with Uber.

Sincerely,  
Howard Courtney

a p l a c e f o r t h e w h o l e f a m i l y

1571 Innisfil Beach Road

phone: 705.436.16

fax: 705.436.146

email: info@innisfilchurch.com