

Request for Transit Service at Villa St. Gabriel Villa

Presented To:	Community and Emergency Services Committee
Meeting Date:	March 17, 2025
Type:	Correspondence for Information Only
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Recommended by:	General Manager of Community Development

Report Summary

This report provides information regarding options and estimated costs to provide transit services to Villa St. Gabriel Villa to support staff, residents, and visitors attending the facility.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans

This report describes work related to the Transit Action Plan and continued efforts to expand ridership through innovative and responsive system improvements, in alignment with the Asset Management and Service Excellence objective, and goal 1.5 “Demonstrate Innovation and Cost-Effective Service Delivery”.

Within the Low-Carbon Transportation Strategy Sector of the Community Energy & Emissions Plan, this report aligns with Goal 7, to enhance transit services to enhance transit mode share to 25% by 2050.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background

During the September 9, 2024, Community Services Committee meeting, through Resolution CES2024-31-A1, Staff were directed to prepare a report that includes estimated costs and constraints, and any studies or trials which have been done in the past regarding transit services travelling to Villa St. Gabriel Villa (VSGV) for Council’s consideration. Specific analysis and costing for the following options was requested:

- i) an increase or adjustment to the GOVA Zone service which aligns with the needs of VSGV,
- ii) the addition of winter maintenance on the lit, paved path from Place Bonaventure Mall to VSGV to provide year-round pedestrian access, and
- iii) the addition of winter maintenance on the paved path from the end of Pinellas/Keith Avenue to VSGV to provide year-round pedestrian access.

On March 05, 2015, through Resolution FA2015-13, staff were directed to provide a one (1) year trial of transit service to VSGV. Via the Azilda-Chelmsford transit route (at that time), transit service was provided to the VSGV three times a day, seven days a week. This one-year trial was approved by Council and funded by the Provincial Gas Tax.

The results of the trial concluded that service to Villa St. Gabriel Villa did not generate significant ridership and the recovery ratio was consistently below 1% each month. As GOVA Zone TransCab service was available along Municipal Road 15 as a cost effective and efficient way of providing transit service to low density areas within City limits, on-site transit service to VSGV was discontinued as of September 2, 2016.

Transit Planning

The GOVA Transit system is built on a “pulse”, where all route departures are scheduled to depart at the same time, and all route arrivals are scheduled to arrive at the same time. These route connections are integral to ensuring customers’ ability to travel throughout the transit system conveniently and seamlessly. Any minor deviation to a route pattern requires additional route running time and layover/recovery time to ensure route connectivity within the system network pulse. When increasing a route running time, the additional time must be added to every trip per service day. Any deviations to route running time must align with work rules in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and service level budget while ensuring transit system reliability, transit best practices, and passenger satisfaction.

As outlined within the Transit Action Plan, the overarching best practice within the transit industry is to best match service to ridership demand through the provision of a family of services.

Existing Transit Service to Villa St. Gabriel Villa

GOVA Conventional Service

GOVA Transit operates 40-foot buses on fixed route schedules in higher population areas throughout the Greater Sudbury area. Route 104 Azilda-Chelmsford runs every 45 minutes during peak periods from the Downtown Transit Hub to the Chelmsford Mobility Hub, at Place Bonaventure Mall. The walking distance from the Chelmsford Mobility Hub, via Municipal Road 15, to VSGV is approximately 550 meters (7-10 minutes).

The Transit Action Plan confirms that individuals who are within 450 metres of a bus stop are within the transit service area. VSGV is situated approximately 100 metres outside of the conventional transit service area, but within the GOVA Zone C TransCab service area.

In 2024, Route 104 had 194,605 riders, averaging 22 rides per revenue hour. The total route cost was approximately \$1.37 million, with a cost/recovery rate of 25%. Route 104 is on the higher end of cost/recovery when compared to the average GOVA commuter route cost/recovery rate of 22%, and the overall network cost/recovery rate of 38%.

GOVA Zone (TransCab Service)

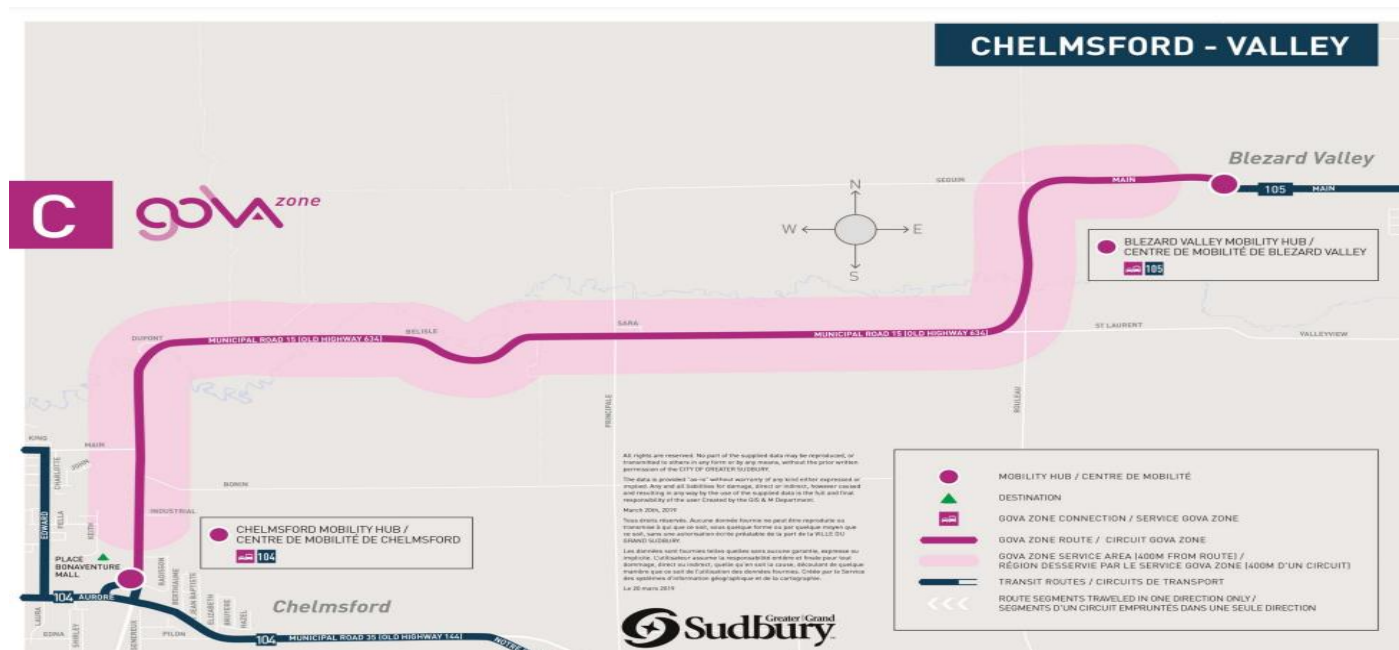
GOVA Zone (TransCab) supplements Conventional Transit Service by providing door-to-door, shared service, in nine lower population density, and outlying communities. Typically, services are within areas of the city that are not easily accessible by GOVA Transit conventional buses and offer connection to fixed conventional transit routes at key points.

GOVA Zone C (Chelmsford-Valley) services via Municipal Road 15, from Place Bonaventure Chelmsford Mobility Hub to the Blezard Valley Community Hub, within a 400-metre distance from the road, identified as the service area. GOVA Zone C provides regular service to VSGV, through Route 104 Azilda-Chelmsford connection times; 11 times per weekday, and 7 times per weekend, aligning with ridership demand and other

GOVA Zone areas.

The 2024 total cost of GOVA Zone C TransCab service was \$14,965, which was 92% of budget, with the average kilometres travelled per trip being 9.21 kilometres. The contracted rate per kilometre is \$3.90.

Between 2016 and May 11, 2024, there was no GOVA Zone ridership logged to/from VSGV. Between May 11, 2024, and January 17, 2025, GOVA Zone C TransCab service has been utilized for a total of 39 trips for 43 passengers; averaging 0.18 riders a day.



Route 104 Pattern Change Analysis

Route 104 Transit Service via Pinellas/Keith- Added Winter Maintenance

To service closer to VSGV with use of a walking path and adjusted transit service through Route 104 via Keith/Pinellas, Route 104 would be rerouted from Edward Avenue to Pinellas Road and Keith Avenue. This change would remove service from the Chelmsford Community Centre and Arena. Further, two bus stops, including a bus shelter, would be relocated to Pinellas and Keith, affecting an average of 12 riders per day. The running time for Route 104 would increase by 15 minutes during off-peak times increasing its overall route running time to 1 hour and 30 minutes. The approximate cost of this service increase is \$144,944.00.

The paved path from the end of Pinellas Road/Keith Avenue is a City of Greater Sudbury unopened road allowance which abuts a parcel of land owned by Union Gas, running north/south, between Place Bonaventure Mall at Highway 144 and the train tracks near Main Street. The Union Gas owned property is an unmaintained gravel path through green space, with an agreement allowing the City of Greater Sudbury to use it as a pedestrian trail from May to October. In winter, the area is used and maintained for snowmobiling by the Sudbury Trail Plan Association. To add winter maintenance to this path to facilitate pedestrian access would negatively impact the snowmobile route which connects winter travel/tourism within the community. Further review and analysis would be required to allow year-round pedestrian use of this pathway.

Due to the removal of service to Chelmsford Community Centre and Arena and absent of feasible year-round access to the pathway to VSGV, including considerations for accessibility, this service change is not recommended.

Route 104 Transit Service direct to Villa St. Gabriel Villa

Where the implementation of the Transit Action Plan resulted in route realignment and on-site/private property transit services being removed in areas such as at Pioneer Manor and Meadowbrook Retirement Community. With consideration for proximity of transit and the age friendly population health strategy, on-site/private property service was maintained at Finlandia Village. This acknowledges the balance between delivering efficient fixed route services and supporting accessible transportation options.

To evaluate the feasibility of on-site service, Transit Training and Operations Staff met with Villa St. Gabriel Villa staff on November 13th, 2024. It was determined that, with sufficient access/egress from the roadway and on-site space to maneuver/turn around, using a GOVA conventional transit bus, service could safely be added on-site.

During the November 13th meeting, VSGV staff provided the following input:

- VSGV staffing ratios have significantly increased since 2016 with the addition of new positions like Behavioural Support workers.
- Conventional transit would support student and volunteer programs.
- Villa St. Gabriel Villa is one of three French Catholic long-term care homes in Ontario.
- GOVA Zone requires 90-minute advance notice for scheduled bus connections, which is unreliable for on-call staff.
- GOVA Zone connection times support three out of five shift times on weekdays and two out of five shift times on weekends. Outside these times, VSGV staff and residents walk to/from the Place Bonaventure Chelmsford Mobility Hub via Municipal Road 15, raising concerns about pedestrian safety, especially during winter months.
- VSGV staff would prefer on-site service through Route 104 as opposed to service via Keith/Pinellas or an increase in GOVA Zone service.

A staff survey conducted between June 10th and June 20th, 2024, revealed:

- 46 team members take the bus five or more times weekly.
- An additional 16 use transit three to four times a week.
- 85% of all surveyed (96 respondents) would take the bus if VSGV had an on-site stop.

To support service to VSGV via Route 104 using Municipal Road 15, the existing fixed route would require rerouting from Municipal Road 35 to Municipal Road 15, on outbound trips. The running time for Route 104 would increase by 15 minutes during off-peak times, increasing its overall route running time to 1 hour 30 minutes. The approximate annual cost of this service level change would be \$144,944.00.

Financial Implications

Route 104 Transit Service direct to Villa St. Gabriel Villa

The cost to provide this service on site to Villa St-Gabriel Villa based on the current Route 104 schedule would be \$144,944. This option requires bus stop infrastructure and the addition of one full time employee.

Weekday + Weekend + Stat:	Cost per Year (\$)	Annual Hours
To add 3 trips	\$ 42,042	273
To add 6 trips	\$ 84,084	546
To add all trips	\$ 144,944	941

Increase GOVA Zone C (TransCab Service)

The annual cost increase to provide this service, based on 2024 GOVA Zone C ridership and future ridership growth projections, would be approximately \$6,800. The cost of increasing GOVA Zone trips can fluctuate lower/higher depending on the amount of kilometres travelled and amount of passenger trips, as this increase would benefit the entire GOVA Zone C service area. Based on historical costs and under-utilized areas across GOVA Zone locations throughout the system, this could be accommodated within the existing service model.

This option has no additional cost related to infrastructure or employee salary and benefits. Through CDD21-49, service level increases are permitted upon written notice to the Service Provider in accordance with the rates or costs as outlined within the contract.

Weekday + Weekend + Stat:	Cost per Year (\$)
To add 1 trip	\$ 850
To add 2 trips	\$ 1,700
To add 3 trips	\$ 2,550
To add 4 trips	\$ 3,400
To add 8 trips (4 weekday/4 weekend)	\$ 6,800

Summary

There are options to proceed whether by increasing GOVA conventional fixed route service level increase to provide on-site service, or GOVA Zone services with an estimated cost of \$6,800, subject to ridership. Where an increase in GOVA Zone could be done within existing budget, it is noted, through consultation that VSGV did not prefer this option. Should Council elect to direct staff to add VSGV to a fixed Route 104, a business can be brought forward for 2026-2027 Budget.

Resources Cited

Resolution FA2015-13, Finance and Administration Committee, March 05, 2015

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=5c226d75-33a0-42ed-81c3-fb7b13b753d4&lang=English>

Report- Transit Service to St. Gabriel Villa, Community Services Committee, July 11, 2016

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=10841>

Go Snowmobiling Ontario, Interactive Trail Guide, <https://ofsc.evtrails.com/#>