

Navigating Grand Erie: Transportation Survey

Summary Report

February 2021

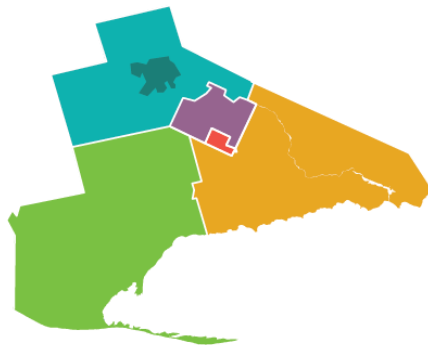


Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie
Commission de planification de la main-d'œuvre de Grand Erie



OUR VISION

A skilled, resilient workforce contributing to
dynamic communities and their economies



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Executive Summary

Affordable and accessible public transit is an integral component of community and workforce development. It has significant impacts on a population's ability to travel for employment, education, healthcare, leisure and more, as well as on a region's ability to foster its tourism sector. Given the vast geographic boundaries, limited population and small tax base of Grand Erie (comprised of the City of Brantford, County of Brant, Haldimand County, Norfolk County, Six Nations and New Credit), the development of public transit has been a longstanding challenge for each municipality and for the area.

Transportation community leaders from across the Grand Erie area and beyond, including South Central Ontario Region Economic Development Corporation (SCOR EDC) and other municipal leaders have, after many years of collaboration, formed the Southwest Community Transit (SCT) network. This network will focus on continued development and coordination of for a more sustainable transportation system serving rural Ontario. To support their decision making about regional transit priorities, and to understand the local transportation needs and opportunities for collaborative approaches in the Grand Erie area, the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie (WPBGE) developed and launched a transportation survey in the fall of 2020, titled Navigating Grand Erie.

Data on transit needs, interests and deterrents was collected from 425 residents within the Grand Erie area. This report provides a summary of key findings. Highlights include:

- 46% do not live close to a bus stop, of which 13% were from Brant County, 12% from Norfolk & 4% from Brantford (areas noted have public transit)
- 80% of full-time workers own vehicles compared to 48% of unemployed individuals
- 71% would be interested in an intercommunity transit system if available
- The top two reasons for using an intercommunity bus service are (i) leisure and (ii) to get to and from work
- Inconvenience and limited service/operating hours are major deterrents to transit use

Based on the information presented within this report, a few recommendations are made, namely:

- Establish regular and convenient transit/shuttle routes on key highways/regional roads
- Continue to collaborate with the private sector to coordinate routes and schedules
- Continue to establish intercommunity transit or shuttle service between key institutional, residential, and employment areas at key working/learning hours

- Explore opportunities to integrate mobile friendly payment methods on SCT's website
- Implement an educational/marketing campaign on cost-effectiveness of public transportation and available routes/services
- Continue to explore employment targeted routing by encouraging the establishment of cost sharing agreements between businesses, municipal and provincial governments
- Continue to establish transfer hubs at key locations along common municipal borders
- Establish transfer stations/transit shelters at existing institutions and businesses that are comfortable, flexible and convenient for the user and the established route(s)
- Improve the walkability in employment areas, and create comfortable and safe environments for walking and waiting
- Establish a Grand Erie car-pool network application/portal for those travelling from the same area to the same workplace/school
- Marketing campaign connecting transit with area tourism
- Encourage existing businesses looking to expand to stay within the Grand Erie area offering multiple locations
- Encourage businesses to work with local school bus/coach bus businesses to provide transit benefits to their employees
- Encourage businesses to provide transit passes to their employees as a benefit
- Plan for a mix of higher density, affordable and attractive forms of residential homes along major highways and main arterials that can be quickly connected to transit routes and connected with employment areas
- Promote the development of more walkable/cycle friendly communities
- Promote the development/expansion of small businesses to go mobile and cater to the needs of people in employment areas utilizing shuttle services, transit shelters and transfer stations

Transportation decision-makers are encouraged to use the data collected to inform transit priorities and support applications for further funding for the development of transportation infrastructure within the Grand Erie area and beyond.

Introduction

As Ontario continues to develop and expand, the demand for affordable and accessible transportation is becoming a growing concern for municipalities in the Grand Erie area, especially in rural areas. Over the years, municipal and regional governments and organizations such as the South Central Ontario Region Economic Development Corporation (SCOR EDC) have made a number of strides in strengthening regional connectivity, both to help residents access education, employment, medical care, recreational activities, shopping and personal services and to support the growing tourism sector.

With the goal of leveraging community partnerships to create sustainable transportation solutions, in 2019, SCOR EDC launched the South Central Transit (SCT) network, designed to coordinate intercommunity transit. Several municipalities in Southwestern Ontario participate in the SCT network, including the County of Brant and Norfolk County¹.

In the fall of 2020, the WPBGE launched a transportation survey, titled *Navigating Grand Erie*. The purpose of the survey was to understand more about how limited transportation options affects the workforce, to support current transit providers in their decision making about transit routes, costs and services, and to encourage new, collaborative and innovative transit solutions. WPBGE launched a transportation survey in the fall of 2020, titled *Navigating Grand Erie*. Through summarizing data collected within this survey, this report aims to provide transportation coordinators, planners and government officials – both within Grand Erie (i.e. the City of Brantford, County of Brant, Haldimand County, Norfolk County, Six Nations and New Credit) and in surrounding areas- with an overview of local residents' needs and interests in an intercommunity transit system.

Background

In 2014, the Rural Institute of Ontario published a resource titled Towards Coordinated Rural Transportation², outlining several challenges to rural transportation, including:

- Low density and dispersed nature of population, employment and services
- Long-distance nature of trips
- Lower tax base

As a result of these challenges, residents of Brantford-Brant have one of the highest average travel times when compared to other Ontario CMA, based on 2016 census

¹ SCOR AGM Presentation (Oct. 2020)

² https://planh.ca/sites/default/files/towards_coordinated_rural_transportation_resource_document_aug_27.pdf

data³. Residents of Haldimand and Norfolk counties have even longer commutes (see Appendix (i)). Longer commutes have significant impact on individual health, safety, and personal finance, as well as on the environment⁴. A recent American study undertaken by Oxford Academic pinpoints commuting time as the single strongest factor in the odds of escaping poverty⁵. The more convenient the work commute is, the more productive and healthier each person will be.

According to WPBGE's 2019 Job Seeker and Employee Survey, location (i.e.: proximity to home or child's daycare) was cited as a top factor when looking for work by 39% of job seekers⁶. Around 17% identified availability of transportation as another key factor. WPBGE's 2019 In-Demand Skilled Trades project revealed similar concerns among employers of apprentices and journeypersons, particularly within the industrial and construction sectors in smaller communities⁷. Members of the Skilled Trades Alliance have also identified lack of transportation as a key reason why many indigenous students don't participate in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP). Limited transit options also affect job seekers' capacity to find and secure meaningful work. Local job seekers identified lack of transportation options to get to and from work as the second largest barrier to finding work⁵. Additionally, around 14% of our region's workforce left a job in the last year due to distance from their residence and the time/cost of travelling to/from work⁵. Further, cost of travel and distance/time required were identified in 2015 as key reasons behind adult learners' inability to access education and training programs in Grand Erie⁸. Since then, local educational programs have become more wide-spread, but access issues continue to prevail for those living in rural regions.

Developing regional transit, however, is costly. While fares cover around 62% of the cost of systems in large urban areas, they cover only 35% of the cost in smaller centers (under 50,000 residents), according to 2015 Ministry of Transportation data⁹. To acquire additional funding and/or to make decisions about transit priorities, data on potential demand for regional public transportation is required. WPBGE's *Navigating Grand Erie*:

³ [https://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/census/cenhi16-14.html#:~:text=Ontarians%20have%20the%20Longest%20Commutes%20in%20Canada&text=Ontarians%20had%20a%20slightly%20longer,Edward%20Island%20\(18.0%20minutes\).](https://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/census/cenhi16-14.html#:~:text=Ontarians%20have%20the%20Longest%20Commutes%20in%20Canada&text=Ontarians%20had%20a%20slightly%20longer,Edward%20Island%20(18.0%20minutes).)

⁴ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/190225/dq190225a-eng.htm>

⁵ <https://academic.oup.com/qje/article/133/3/1107/4850660>

⁶ <https://workforceplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2019-Job-Seeker-and-Employee-Survey-Results-Report2.pdf>

⁷ <https://workforceplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/FINAL-REPORT-In-Demand-Skilled-Trades-Report-Posted-to-website.pdf>

⁸ WPBGE's 2015 Grand Erie Adult Learning Research Study

⁹ <https://www.tvo.org/article/how-small-ontario-towns-are-finding-new-transit-solutions>

Transportation Survey was developed to provide transportation coordinators with such local level data, and to assist them with the identification of existing service gaps.

Survey Overview

Prior to developing the survey, data from past transportation research within the Grand Erie region was collected and synthesized. This, along with transportation survey templates from surrounding municipalities (Oxford County and Middlesex County), was used to draft a preliminary set of questions.

Following this, a meeting was set up with Grand Erie's transportation coordinators, namely:

- Kim Earls (SCOR EDC)
- Christian Zavarella (SCOR EDC)
- Blaire Sylvester (Ride Norfolk)
- Sheena Yarek (Brant E-Ride)
- Elisabeth Van Der Made (Brantford Transit)
- Zach Gable (Brant County EcDev)
- Zvi Lifshiz (Norfolk County EcDev)
- Lidy Romanuk (Haldimand County EcDev)
- Jaymie Nelson (Haldimand County EcDev)

The survey questions were shared with the group and feedback was collected on additional topics/areas of interest. Revisions were made accordingly.

Navigating Grand Erie: Transportation Survey was live for a period of 3 months, between October 1st to December 31st, 2020.

Methodology

The survey was primarily conducted online due to restrictions around the COVID-19 pandemic, using social media marketing tools to target a diverse sample of residents across the Grand Erie area.

To expand the survey reach, a number of other means were also used:

- Media releases
- Paper copies at public libraries
- Paper copies at local Employment Services offices
- Advertisements on local public transits (Brantford Transit and Ride Norfolk)

Community partners (i.e. economic development, Employment Ontario network) were also asked to circulate the survey via their communication channels.

Limitations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, promotion and distribution of the survey was limited. Although efforts were made to diversify how the survey was shared, most respondents were reached via WPBGE's media outreach, partner distribution and social media posts/ads.

As a result of this, people in rural communities with limited internet access are likely underrepresented within this survey, as are individuals with limited computer literacy skills and those that do not use social media.

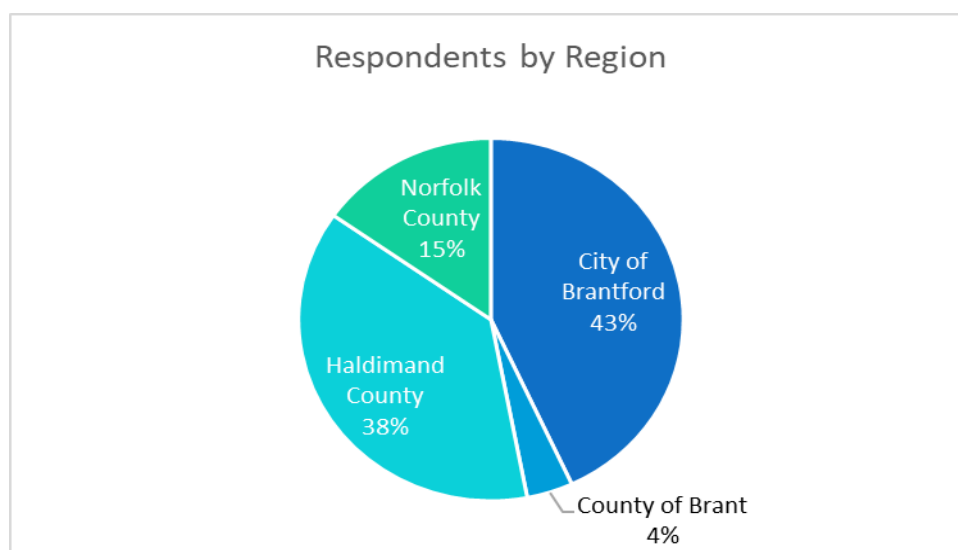
Survey Sample

Navigating Grand Erie collected data from 425 residents within the Grand Erie area.

By Region

As illustrated by Graph 1 below, approximately 43% of respondents reside in Brantford, 38% in Haldimand County, 15% in Norfolk County and 4% from the County of Brant. No responses were received from Six Nations or New Credit.

Haldimand County residents are overrepresented within this sample, while County of Brant residents are significantly underrepresented. Due to the limited number of County of Brant respondents, many of the results presented below combine County of Brant and City of Brantford respondent data.

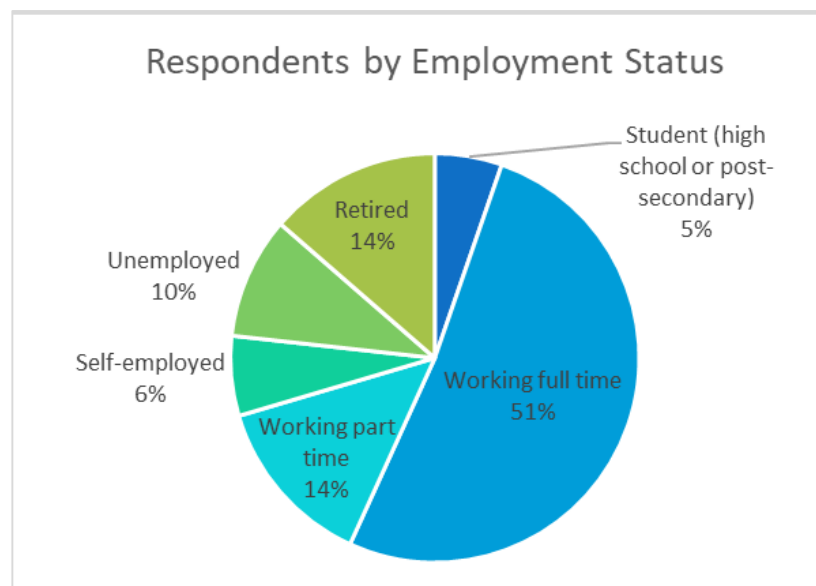


Graph 1: Respondents by Region

Due to the fact that regional data was based on respondents' postal codes, there may be some inaccuracies in terms of the location of respondents.

By Employment Status

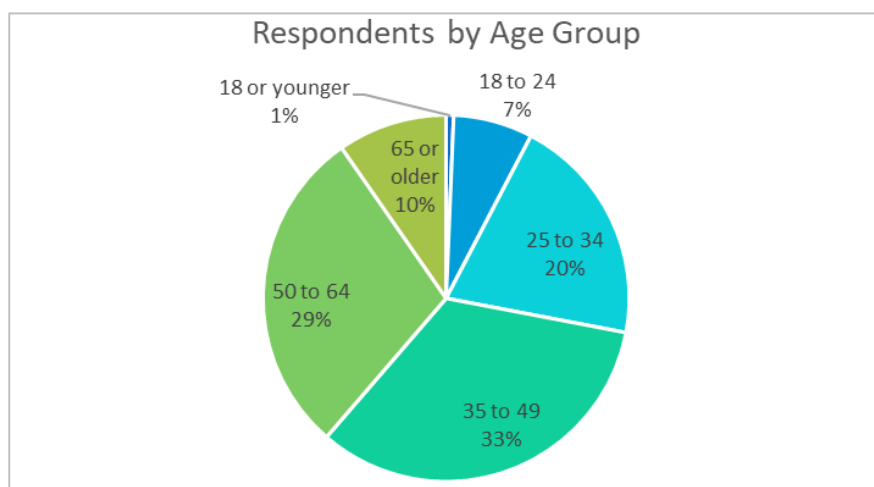
Approximately 65% of respondents were employed, and another 6% were self-employed. The remainder consisted of students (5%), retirees (14%) and unemployed individuals (10%).



Graph 2: Respondents by Employment Status

By Age Group

Age data indicates that most age groups were well represented within the survey sample.



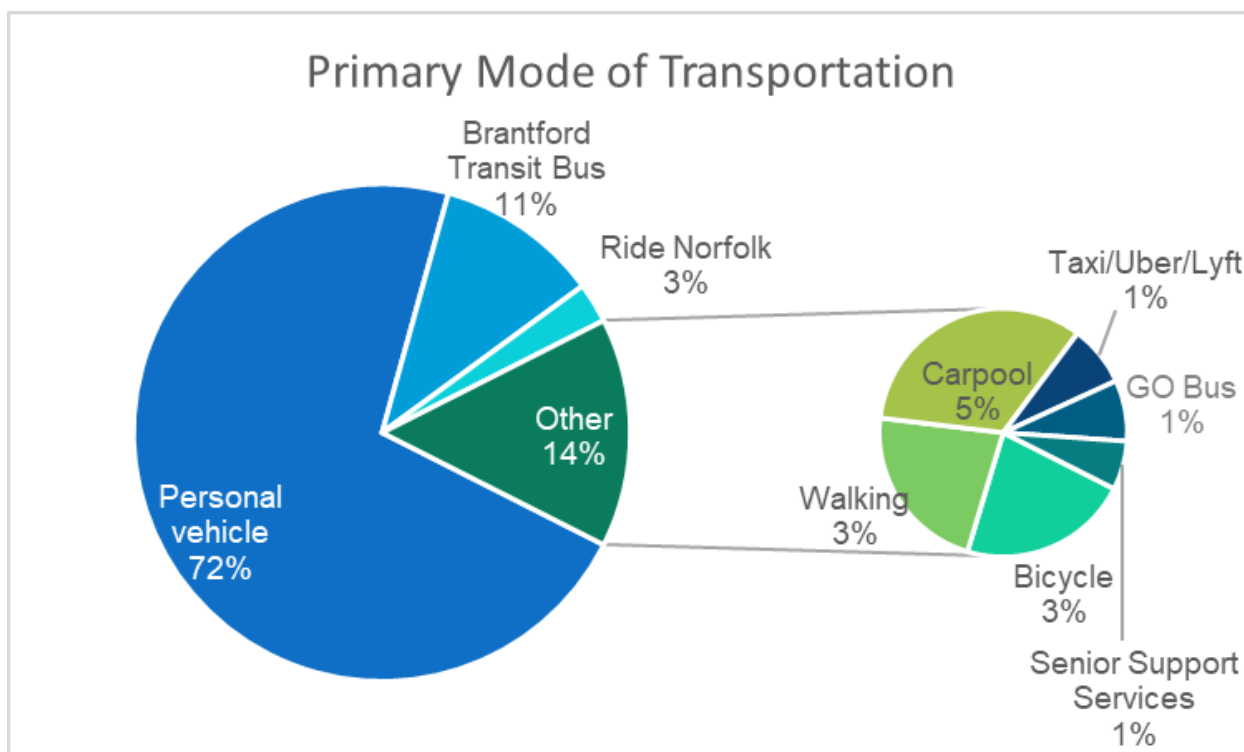
Graph 3: Respondents by Age Group

Key Findings

The Current Commute

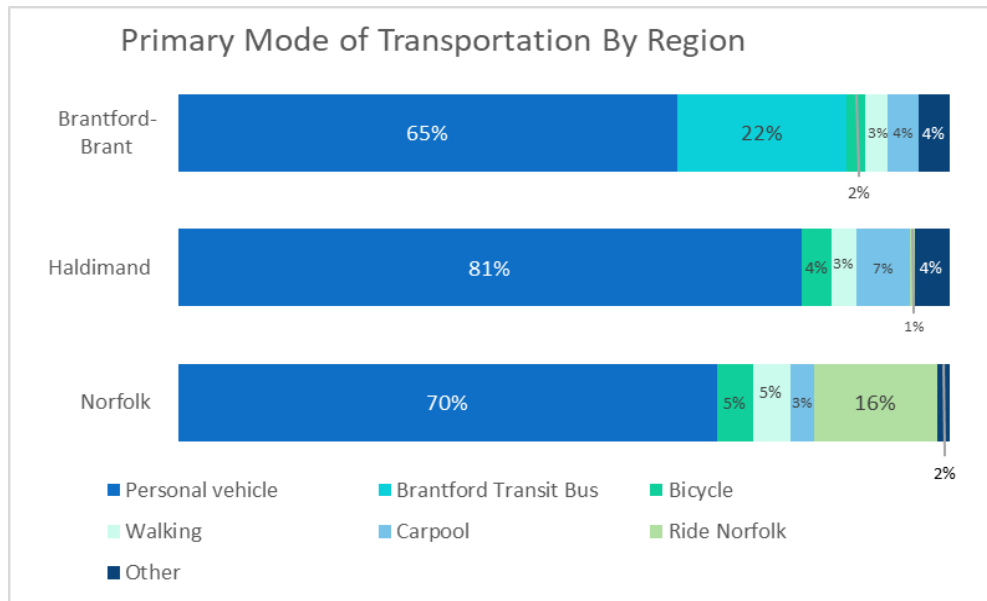
How do people get around?

When asked about their primary mode of transportation, almost 3 in 4 (72%) respondents indicated they use a personal vehicle, while 14% use local public transit. Approximately 5% carpool or rely on friends and family to drive them, 3% bike and another 3% travel by foot. Taxis/Uber/Lyft, GO Bus/Via Rail and Senior Support Services are each used by around 1% of the respondents.



Graph 4: Primary Mode of Transportation

Survey data indicates that use of personal vehicles is much more prevalent within the rural areas. Over 1 in 5 Brantford residents use Brantford Transit, and a slightly smaller portion of Norfolk residents (and a few residents in Haldimand County) frequently use Ride Norfolk. Carpooling was most frequently cited as a primary mode of transport by core-working aged adults (mostly employed).



Graph 5: Primary Mode of Transportation by Region

Almost 80% of full-time employees have personal vehicles, compared to 63% of part-time employees and 48% of unemployed individuals. Part-time workers rely more heavily on public transit, as do self-employed individuals.

Less than 50% of youth (aged 18-24) have personal vehicles, while over 75% of seniors (aged 65+) have cars. Public transit use, on the other hand, was fairly evenly distributed across all age groups.

How much does car ownership cost?

On average, car owners spent between \$2,500 to \$4,000 annually on car insurance, gas and maintenance and repairs.

Of the 304 respondents that use personal vehicles as their primary mode of transport, over 2 in 3 reported spending between \$500 to \$1500 on vehicle insurance. 27% spent more than \$1500 per year.

Gas costs varied significantly more. Around 24% of respondents noted spending between \$1000 to \$1500 on gas costs annually, 26% spent between \$1,500 and \$2500, and 24% spent more than \$2500.

The majority of respondents (55%) reported spending under \$1000 on annual maintenance costs, while around 13% spend over \$2000.

In addition to this, many individuals do not own their vehicles, and instead make monthly payments to lease/own. Data on this expense was not collected within this survey.

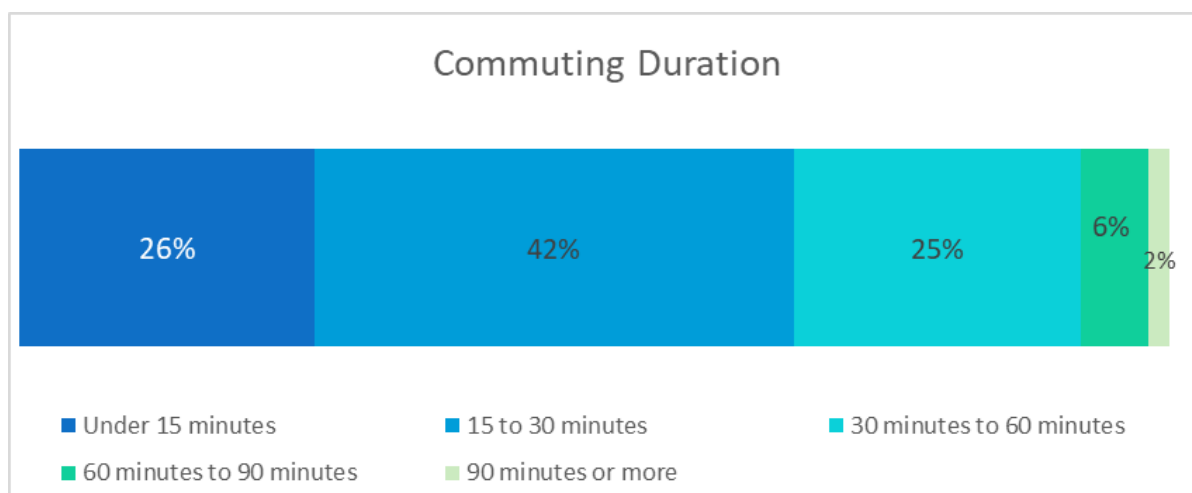
How long do people commute to their primary destination?

On average, residents of Brantford-Brant noted shorter commutes, with around 1 in 3 indicating they take under 15 minutes to get to their primary destination. A little under 1 in 5 residents of Haldimand and Norfolk indicated similar commute times. These commuters almost exclusively use personal vehicles.

Around 38% of Brantford residents said their commute takes between 15 to 30 minutes, compared to around 50% of Haldimand and Norfolk residents. About 73% of these individuals use personal vehicles, and another 12% use local public transit.

Meanwhile, 23% of Brantford residents said they take 30 to 60 minutes, as do 33% of Haldimand residents and 11% of Norfolk's residents. Under 60% of these individuals use personal vehicles, and around 22% indicate local public transit use.

60 min+ commutes was reported by 6% of Brantford residents, 8% of Haldimand residents and 13% of Norfolk residents. Around 27% of commuters who travel over an hour use local public transit and another 15% use intercommunity transit, such as VIA Rail or the GO bus.



Graph 6: Commuting Duration

Self-employed individuals boast the shortest commute times, while part-time workers, on average, have longer commute times than the rest of the sample.

There were no significant correlations between age and travel time.

Additional data from the 2016 Census on residents' commuting patterns is included within the Appendix sections (ii) & (iii).

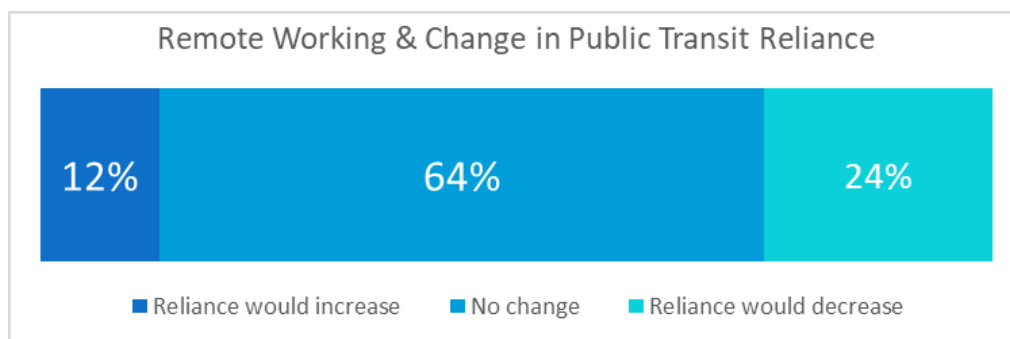
Do employers subsidize travel?

Almost 90% of respondents indicated that their employers offer no transportation supports. A little under 5% of these respondents carpool with other coworkers to their jobs.

Among employees that did indicate transportation support from their employers, the majority – 8% - said they were allowed to work remotely. This figure is likely to change post-pandemic.

Based on WPBGE's EmployerOne 2020 survey results, transportation was cited as an issue by around 20% of employers. However, the majority of employers perceive transportation to be a government/community responsibility, with around 20% recommending increasing the frequency of existing local/regional transit services, increasing public transit infrastructure, and adding routes as potential solutions to address their workforce's transportation concerns. A smaller portion – roughly 10% - advocate for aligning bus schedules with employee shifts and mobilizing employers within the same vicinity to offer a shared shuttle service for their employees¹⁰.

How would remote work/school change interest in public transit?



Graph 7: Remote Working & Change in Public Transit Reliance

Around 12% indicated that they would become more reliant on public transit if their employer/school offered remote working/learning options. Majority were full-time workers

¹⁰ <https://workforceplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/EmployerOne-2020-Survey-Report.pdf>

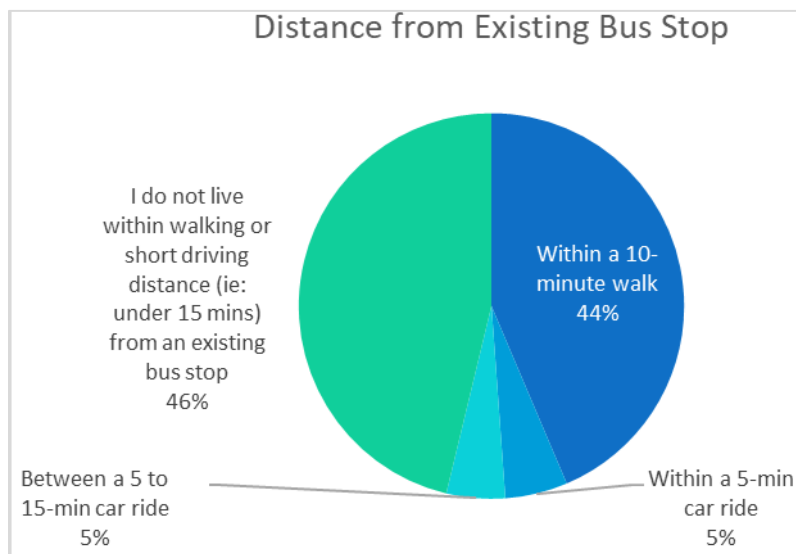
that would be interested in using an intercommunity bus system for leisure or to connect to another mode of transport.

Among current transit users, around 20% stated they would become more reliant on transit, and an equal portion would become less reliant on it.

Perceptions of Transit

How far do people live from a bus stop?

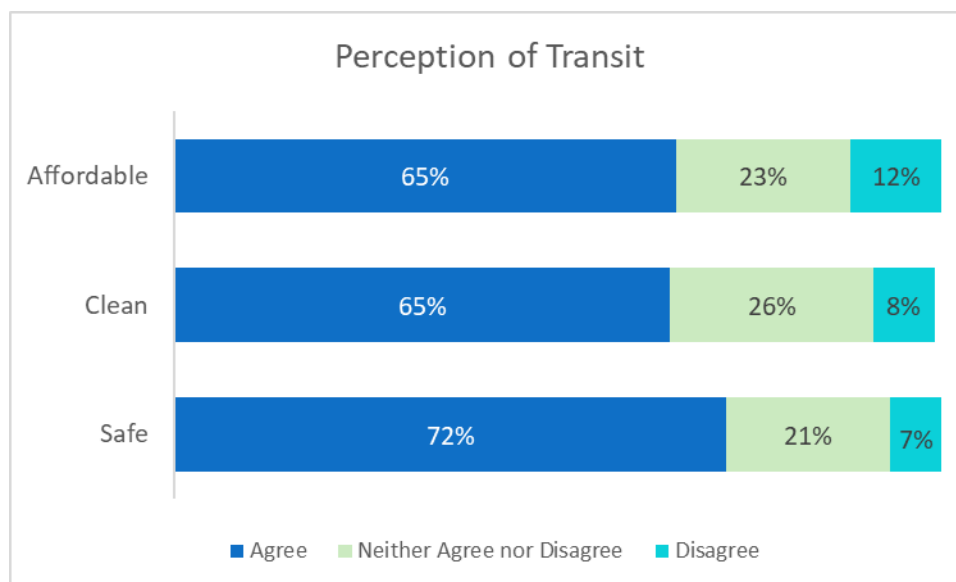
Unsurprisingly, the majority of the 44% of respondents living within 10-minutes walking distance from a bus stop were located in Brantford, while most of the 46% who said they didn't live within a short walk/drive away from an existing bus stop were from Grand Erie's counties.



Graph 8: Distance from Existing Bus Stop

Multiple respondents from the following towns (identified based on postal code data) do not live within close proximity to a bus stop: Hagersville, Townsend, Jarvis, Burford, Langton and Dunnville. This data highlights the need for greater public transit in Grand Erie's rural areas, particularly in Haldimand County.

How do people perceive existing public transit?



Graph 9: Perception of Transit

Majority of travellers who take public transit perceive it positively, with 72% indicating it is safe, and 65% indicating it is clean and affordable.

However, around 12% say that public transit is unaffordable, many of whom are either part-time workers or unemployed individuals. A smaller portion of respondents also indicated that they find public transit to be unclean and/or unsafe.

Interest in Intercommunity Transit

71% of respondents said they would be interested in using an intercommunity transit system if available.

Why would people use intercommunity transit?

When asked about the intended purpose of using intercommunity transit, around 41% of individuals said they would use it for leisure, to shop, to visit people/places or attend events and entertainment. A few respondents noted that they would like for their children to be able to travel around using public transit, rather than having to drive them.

The second most cited reason for this transit use would be to travel to and from work.

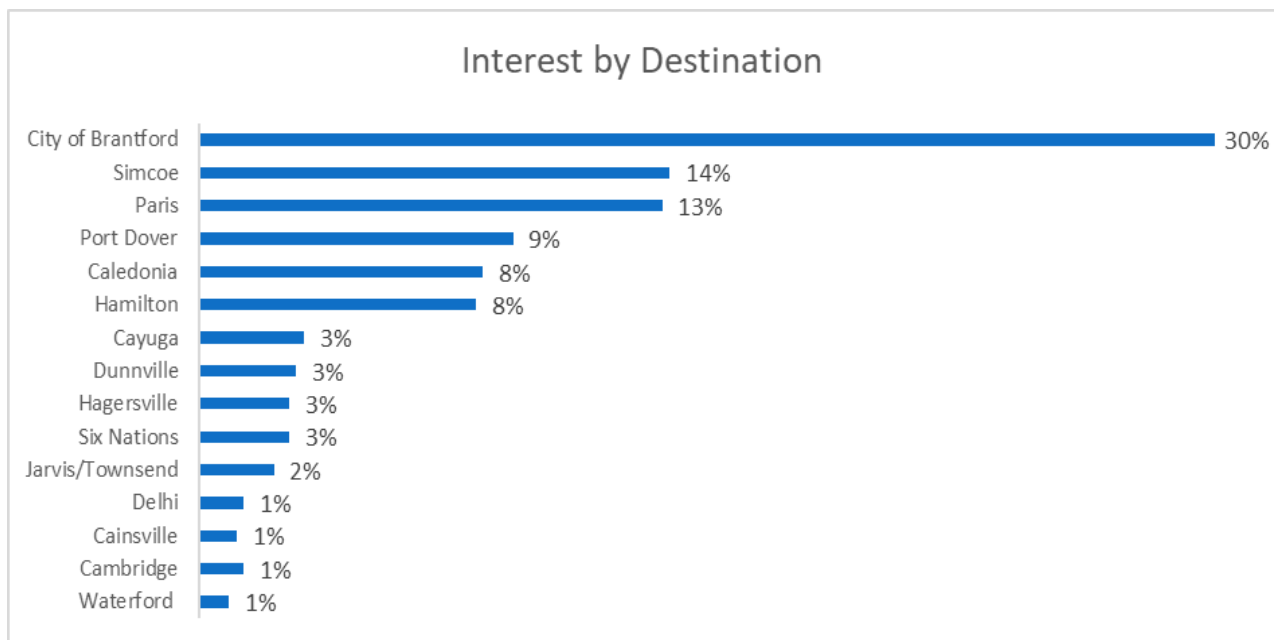
There was also a fair proportion of interest in using intercommunity transit to connect to other modes of transit within the region and to get to and from appointments.



Graph 10: Purpose of Using Intercommunity Transit

A small portion of respondents would be interested in using such a transit system to look for work, get to and from school or get to and from their business meetings during the day.

Where would people travel using intercommunity transit?



Graph 11: Interest by Destination

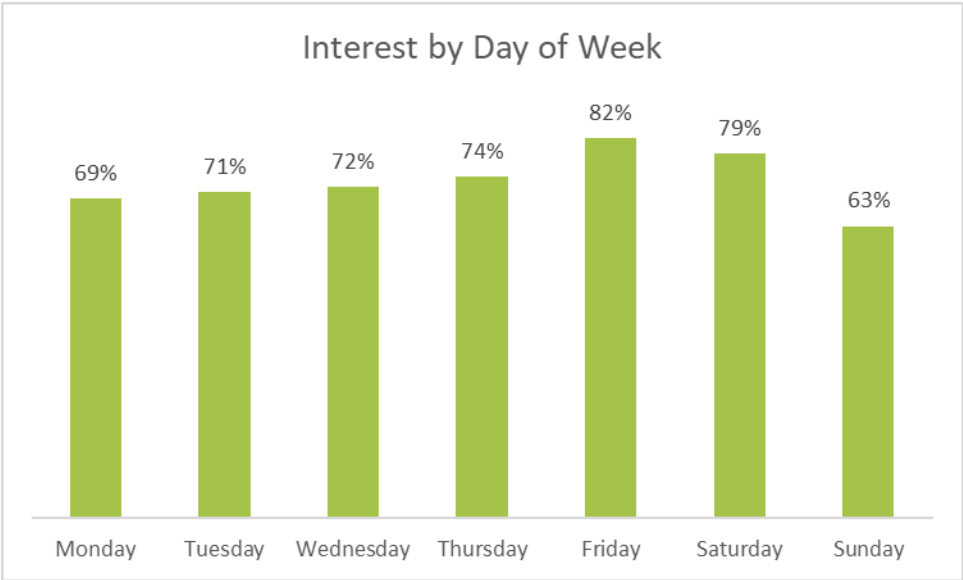
A significant portion of intercommunity transit users are Haldimand and Norfolk County residents interested in travelling into the City of Brantford.

Following this, popular destinations include Simcoe, Paris, Port Dover, Caledonia and Hamilton.

A few respondents also indicated interest in travelling to other surrounding regions, such as Woodstock, Listowel, Welland and Kitchener.

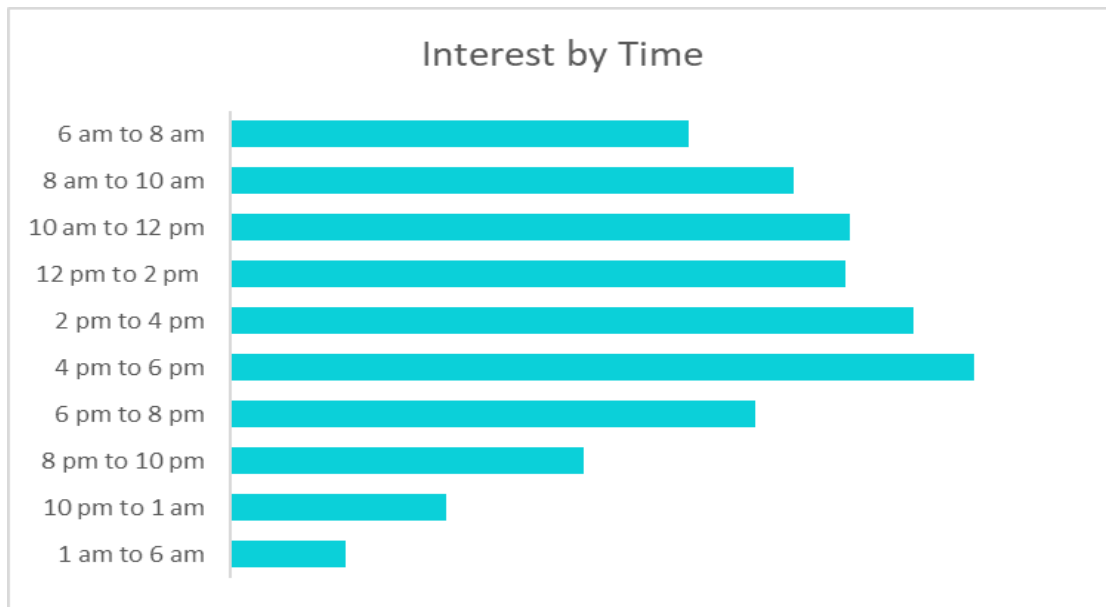
When are people interested in travelling?

Fridays and Saturdays are slightly more popular days for travel according to survey respondents. Many who indicated interest in weekend service are looking to commute for leisure purposes, and may be interested in travelling to malls, parks/beaches, and other social hotspots.



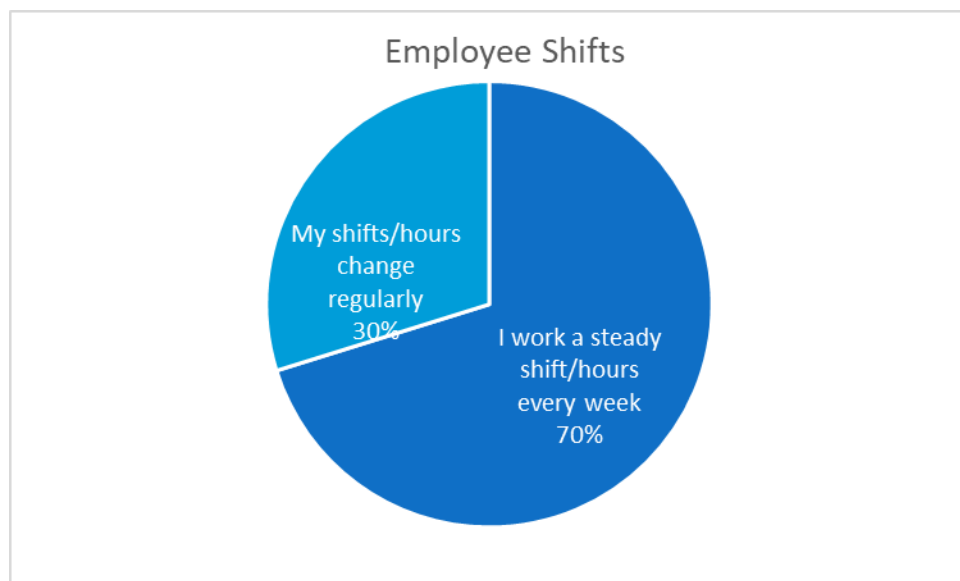
Graph 12: Interest by Day of Week

Most respondents would be interested in travelling between late morning and evening hours (10 am to 6pm). There is some interest in early morning and late night travel as well.



Graph 13: Interest by Time

A more detailed breakdown of interest by travel times and days can be found [here](#).

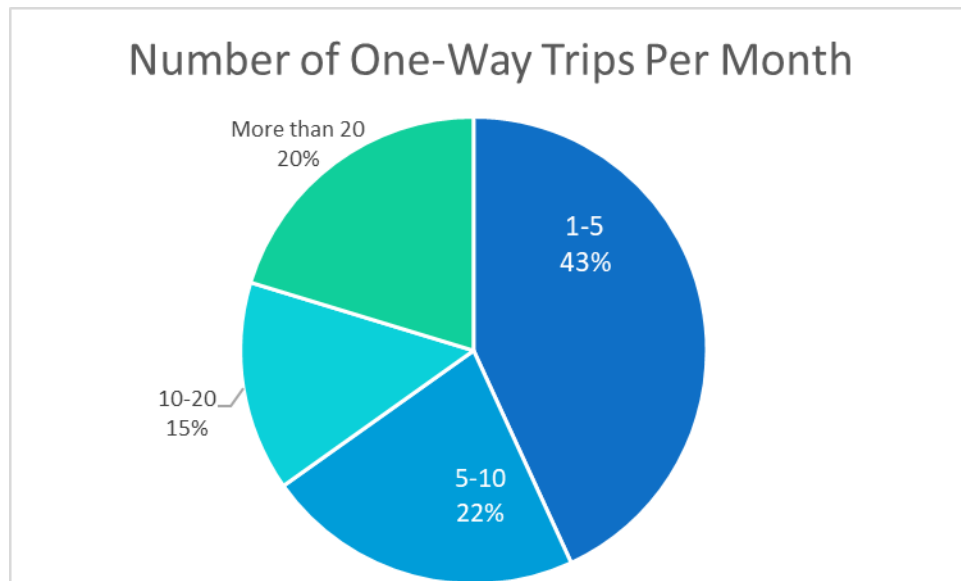


Graph 14: Employee Shifts

Around 70% of employed respondents who would use the intercommunity transit for work have steady shifts, while 30% have changing work hours.

How frequently are people interested in travelling?

The majority of respondents intend to use intercommunity transit infrequently, with 43% making less than 5 one-way trips per month and another 22% making between 5 and 10 one-way trips.



Graph 15: Number of one-way trips per month

More frequent commutes would be made by about 35% of interested travellers. This may be in part due to transit currently being considered inconvenient and inaccessible, especially by rural area residents, many of whom do not live within walking distance of an existing transit/shuttle stop. As more transit routes are developed, connecting a wider geography, frequency of travel is likely to increase.

How much are travellers willing to pay?

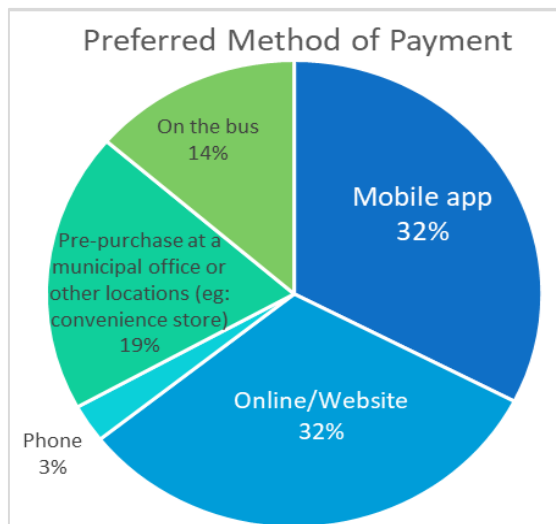
Of those that would be interested in using an intercommunity transit system, the majority – 64% - would prefer to buy tickets electronically – either via a mobile app or online. A smaller portion – 19% - would like to pre-purchase at established locations, and another 14% would prefer paying on the bus.

Around 1/3rd of respondents would be willing to pay a maximum of \$4 per trip, and a little under 1/4th would be willing to pay up to \$6. Around 27% would be willing to pay even more (Graph 17).

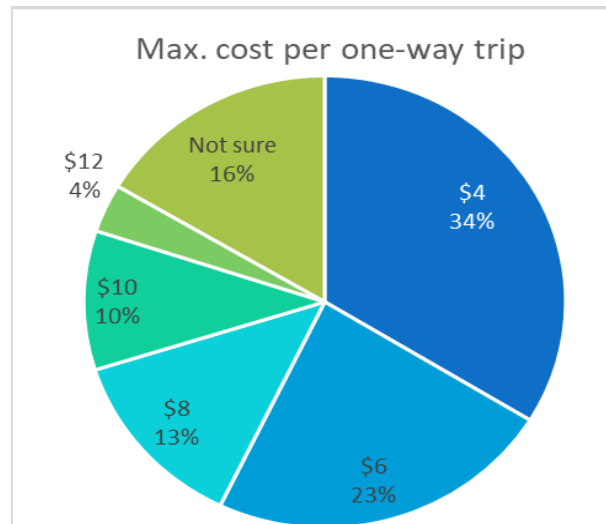
What might deter travellers?

Inconvenience is the biggest deterrent for prospective travellers. Long wait times and harsh weather conditions make transit a less favorable option for around 60% of residents.

Service operating hours ranked second in terms of reasons why one may opt not to use public transit. Interest by time data (Graph 13) reveals that there's significant interest in early morning (before 8 am) travel and some interest in late night (after 10 pm) travel.

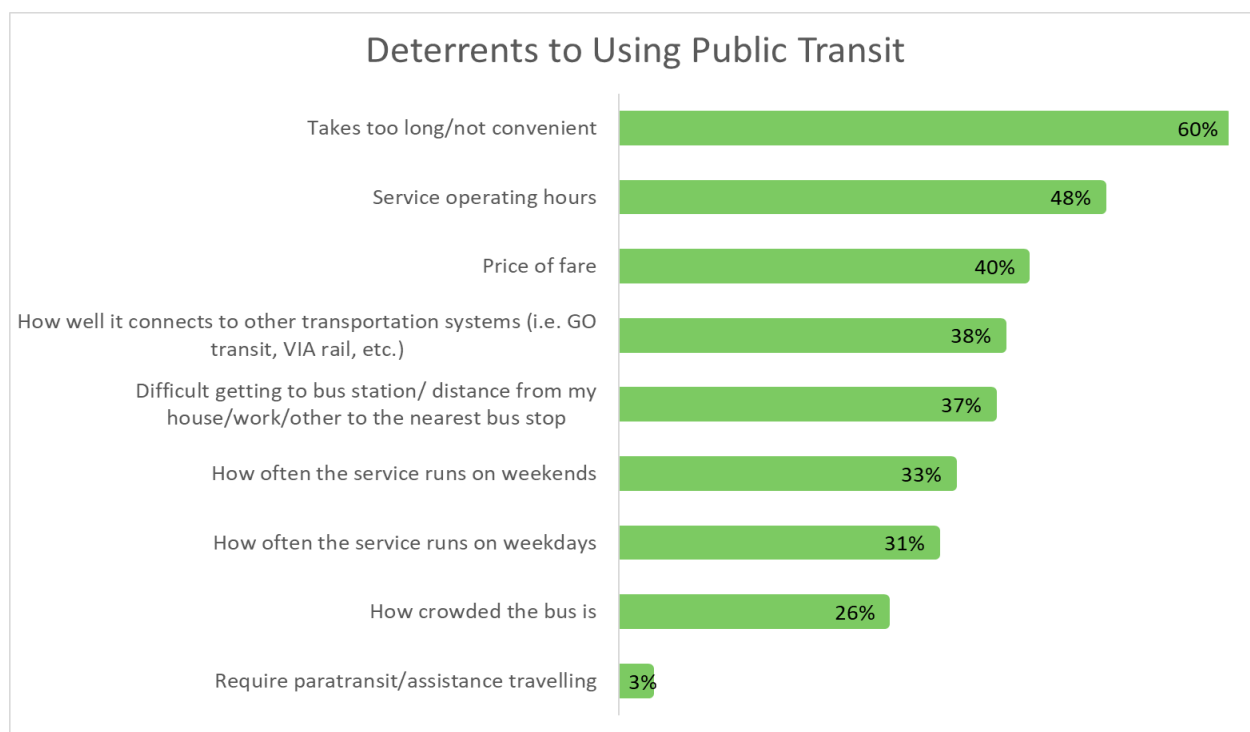


Graph 16: Preferred Method of Payment



Graph 17: Maximum cost per one-way trip

Price of fare, poor connectivity to other transit systems and distance from the nearest bus stop are all similarly ranked deterrents.



Graph 18: Deterrents to Using Public Transit

While physical assistance was only noted by a very small portion of respondents, it is important to note that people with disabilities often do not have other means of getting around (as many do not own/are not able to drive a car) and rely heavily on transit to get to their workplaces and/or to other community support services. Accessibility, thus, must be a key priority in all transit developments.

Recommendations

The efforts of SCOR, the SCT network, municipal governments and other community leaders have resulted in unique collaborations, information-sharing and the identification of many new opportunities to improve the scope of transportation across the region. In order to support and further advance these goals, a few recommendations have been included below, based on the data summarized within this report.

- **Establish regular and convenient transit/shuttle routes on key highways/regional roads** Almost half of all respondents do not live within walking distance of an existing bus stop, many located within rural regions, and in particular, Haldimand County. This makes travel by public transit inaccessible and must be one of the first issues addressed as this will help mitigate concerns about the convenience of transit. Some Haldimand County residents provided recommendations on where transit is most required - Highway 6, Highway 54 and Regional Road 63.

- **Collaborate with the private sector to coordinate routes and schedules**
 Around 30% of respondents who plan on using an intercommunity service to travel to work have changing shift times. To support these individuals, it is important for community transportation coordinators to connect with these businesses, many of whom are medium to large employers in manufacturing, healthcare and retail (see Appendix (iv) for breakdown of occupational category by place of residence). Synchronizing bus times with shifts, creating more direct/expeditious transit routes and working with employers to subsidize transportation of employees are likely to produce mutually beneficial results.
- **Continue to establish intercommunity transit or shuttle service between key institutional, residential, and employment areas at key working/learning hours**
 Municipal transit services and the SCT network have made significant strides in connecting major institutions/employment areas to residential areas. Continued efforts to develop an affordable interconnected system will result in greater interest among local residents in using transit.
- **Explore opportunities to integrate mobile friendly payment methods on SCT's website**
 Given that around 2 in 3 prospective users would be interested in buying tickets on a website or mobile app, SCT would benefit from partnering with smart card technologies like Presto or integrating an alternate online payment system onto the network's (mobile-friendly) website. Some barriers to implementing a joint payment system currently exist, but may be addressed through continued collaboration between transit networks.
- **Implement an educational/marketing campaign on cost-effectiveness of public transportation and available routes/services**
 In the longer term, as remote work becomes more prevalent, trips are likely to reduce. For infrequent travel needs, transit is significantly more cost-effective compared to the cost of car ownership. As the region's transportation network develops and becomes more accessible, it will become important to promote the available services and encourage residents to reconsider their need for a vehicle. Information on the environmental benefits of taking transit should also be highlighted within this campaign.
- **Continue to explore employment targeted routing by encouraging the establishment of cost sharing agreements between businesses, municipal and provincial governments**
 To attract students and the workforce to local schools/jobs, businesses should consider partnering with transit authorities to offer intercommunity transit/shuttle.

WPBGE may be able to support this effort by connecting local businesses and institutions to transit authorities.

➤ **Continue to establish transfer hubs at key locations along common municipal borders**

Some central locations (eg: Norfolk Mall) have been established as transfer hubs, where transit users can connect to surrounding bus systems. Similar hubs should be identified and established throughout the Grand Erie region and beyond.

➤ **Establish transfer stations/transit shelters at existing institutions and businesses that are comfortable, flexible and convenient for the user and the established route(s)**

Considering that convenience is the primary reason behind disinterest in transit, it is important to ensure that transit systems are designed with comfort and convenience in mind. This includes easily accessible bus stops as well as comfortable transit shelters (ie: clear & walkable pathways, trees besides bus stops, wind-proof shelters).

➤ **Improve the walkability in employment areas, and create comfortable and safe environments for walking and waiting**

Local municipal Economic Development, Planning, Public Works and Transportation Departments can work with existing businesses to create safe walking, cycling paths and transit hubs. New Industrial subdivisions should consider the inclusion of sidewalks, transit shelters or hubs and effective lighting and landscape design to support the workforce with getting to and from work safely and conveniently.

➤ **Establish a Grand Erie car-pool network application/portal for those travelling from the same area to the same workplace/school**

Around 14% of residents in Grand Erie left work in 2019 due to the distance between their home and work and the time/cost of travelling (WPBGE Job Seeker & Employee Survey, 2019). While some employers, primarily farmers with a large base of temporary foreign workers and some large manufacturing companies (eg: Ferrero Canada) offer shuttle services for their employees, most do not. By creating ride-sharing options, employers may be able to better support their workforce in getting to and from work, thus reducing turnover caused by employees leaving due to transportation issues.

➤ **Marketing campaign connecting transit with area tourism**

Tourism businesses (ie: accommodations and food services & retail trade) were most severely impacted by COVID-19 (WPBGE Business Insights Survey, 2020). To support the recovery of these businesses, municipal economic development offices

should consider a campaign focused on encouraging residents to use local transit options to get to their favorite tourism destinations.

➤ **Encourage existing businesses looking to expand to stay within the Grand Erie area offering multiple locations**

Almost 40% of Grand Erie's job seekers consider location to be a top factor when looking for work. Local business can broaden their potential labour pool by establishing multiple locations within Grand Erie and working with local transit authorities to set up bus stops in close proximity.

➤ **Encourage businesses to work with local school bus/coach bus businesses to provide transit benefits to their employees**

Around 1 in 4 businesses indicated that their employees had issues with transportation (WPBGE EmployerOne 2020). Particularly for businesses located in remote areas, it may be worthwhile to consider a scheduled pick-up and drop-off bus service that travels from pre-determined locations within the communities their employees live in.

➤ **Encourage businesses to provide transit passes to their employees as a benefit**

WPBGE's job seeker survey identified lack of transportation as the second largest barrier to find work (WPBGE Job Seeker & Employee Survey, 2019). By providing transit passes to their employees, employers may be able to attract job seekers that currently face transportation barriers.

➤ **Plan for a mix of higher density, affordable and attractive forms of residential homes along major highways and main arterials that can be quickly connected to transit routes and connected with employment areas**

Residential property is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain due to the lack of affordable options. As the cost of living increases, there will be an increased demand for housing options, and less demand for vehicle ownership. Municipal governments have a responsibility to respond to the needs of the community with policies that support a strong workforce and economy.

➤ **Promote the development of more walkable/cycle friendly communities**

The Grand Erie area has a wonderful trail system that could support connections into existing and new employment areas. These connections should be so recognizable by vehicular traffic that they become part of the road network and landscape. These routes would give the right-of-way to pedestrians and create a safe path of travel.

- Promote the development/expansion of small businesses to go mobile and cater to the needs of people in employment areas utilizing shuttle services, transit shelters and transfer stations (eg: meals, coffee etc.)

Small businesses should consider new and existing transfer stations and employment areas as areas to consider establishing a mobile business, or expanding their existing business with a mobile component that could bring their services to the travelling workforce.

Conclusion

WPBGE's *Navigating Grand Erie: Transportation Survey* delved into current commuting patterns, highlighting lengthy travel times and a high degree of reliance on personal vehicles, due in part to limited public transportation. It also revealed significant interest among Grand Erie residents in the development of an intercommunity transportation system, and offered insight into individuals' travel needs, concerns and deterrents.

Regional transportation coordinators are encouraged to use the data presented within this report to support their decision-making and applications for further funding and to connect with WPBGE for future data needs or assistance with more analysis. WPBGE believes that developing accessible, affordable, and collaborative community and inter-community transit systems is integral to strengthening the labour market, particularly as we enter the future of sustainable urban and rural development. Ultimately, transit must be attractive and convenient for the workforce who typically have many other responsibilities to balance in their workday, namely caregiving and personal health and wellbeing. The availability and frequency of the service will help ensure there is sufficient ridership to sustain the service, and maintain and attract job seekers in the Grand Erie region. As the Conference Board of Canada aptly notes, 'the time to support a vision for public transportation is now'¹¹.

¹¹ <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/insights/featured/sustainability/the-future-of-sustainable-urban-environments-after-covid-19>

Appendix: Custom Census 2016 Data

(i) Commuting Flow

Below are the top 10 places of work for residents of Grand Erie¹².

Place of Residence: Brantford		
Place of Work	% of Residents	Commuting Duration (mins)
Brantford	61%	11
Brant	10%	16
Hamilton	9%	35
Waterloo	6%	41
Cambridge	4%	40
Halton	3%	50
Oxford	2%	35
Burlington	2%	40
Woodstock	2%	46
Peel	2%	31

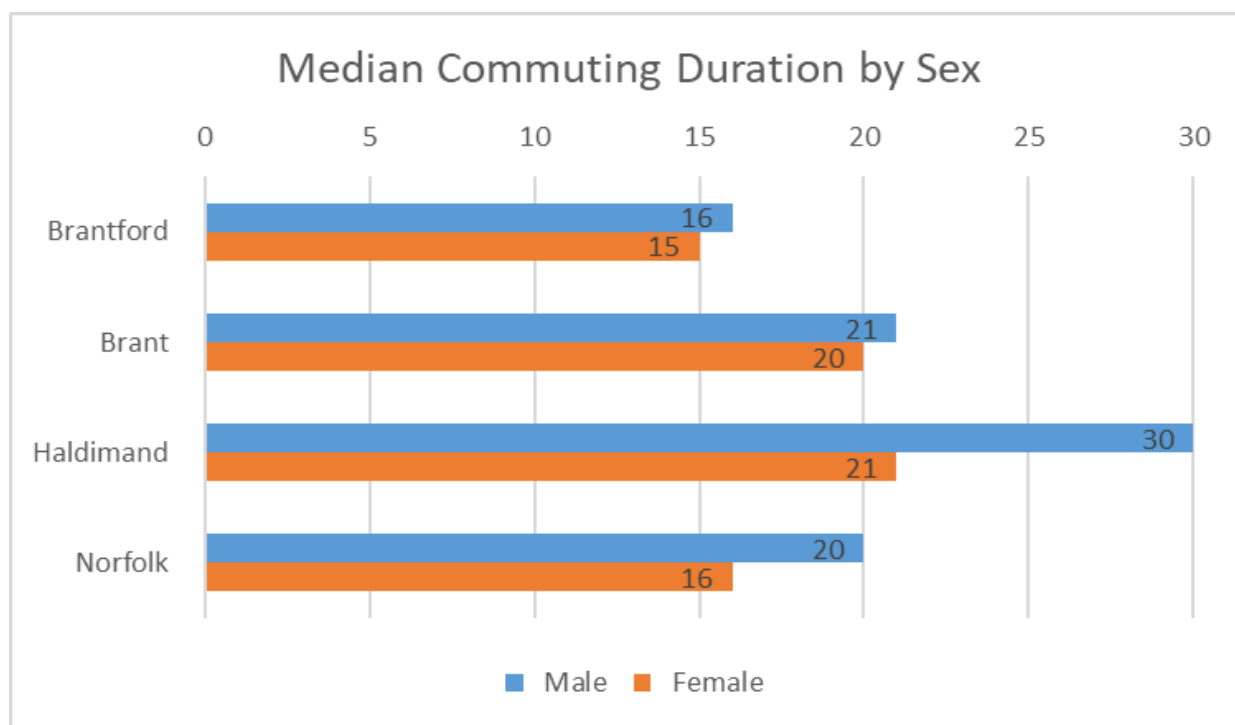
Place of Residence: Brant County		
Place of Work	% of Residents	Commuting Duration (mins)
Brant	56%	15
Brantford	29%	16
Waterloo	16%	31
Hamilton	10%	35
Cambridge	9%	30
Oxford	5%	25
Kitchener	4%	36
Woodstock	3%	26
Halton	3%	46
Norfolk County	2%	31

Place of Residence: Haldimand County		
Place of Work	% of Residents	Commuting Duration (mins)
Haldimand County	44%	11
Hamilton	31%	36
Niagara	6%	36
Halton	5%	55
Brant	5%	35
Norfolk County	4%	21
Burlington	4%	46
Brantford	4%	36
Toronto	1%	80
Peel	1%	71

¹² 2016 Census Custom Tables (T32)

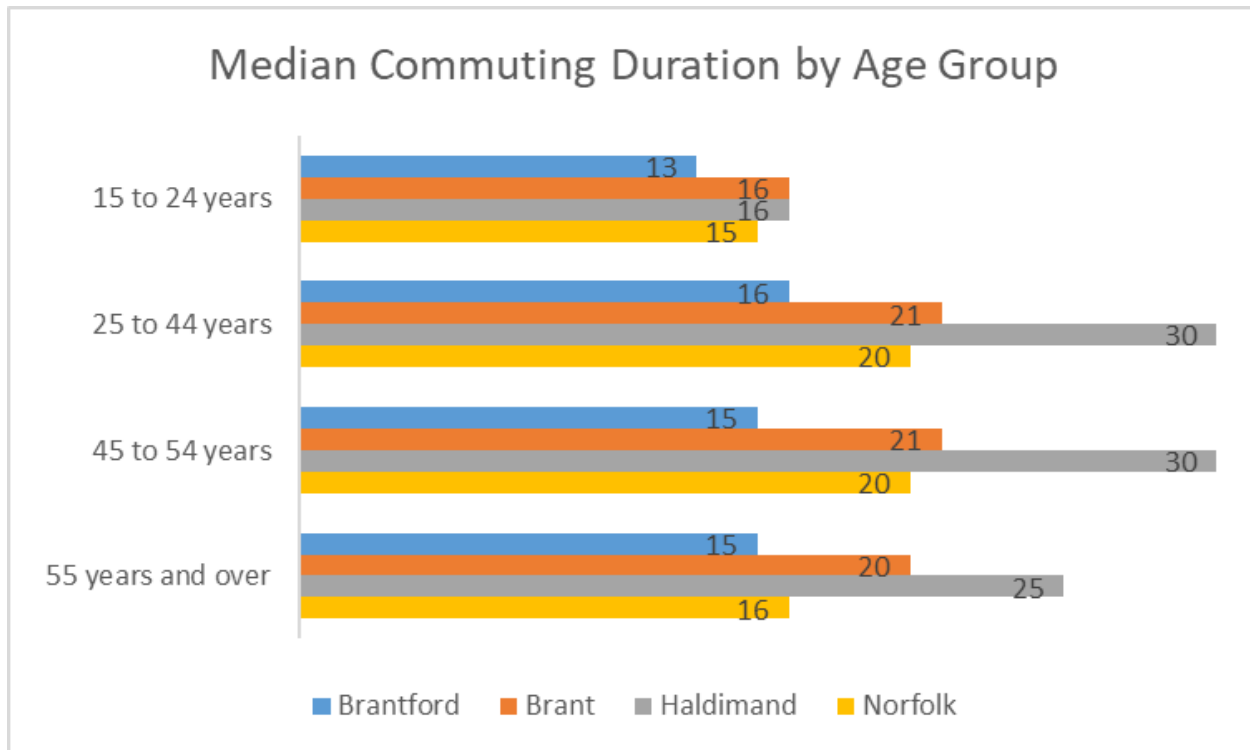
Place of Residence: Norfolk County		
Place of Work	% of Residents	Commuting Duration (mins)
Norfolk County	57%	11
Oxford	12%	26
Brant	10%	35
Haldimand	8%	21
Brantford	7%	36
Tillsonburg	7%	21
Hamilton	4%	60
Brant	3%	31
Woodstock	2%	41
Elgin	2%	30

(ii) Median Commuting Duration by Sex¹³

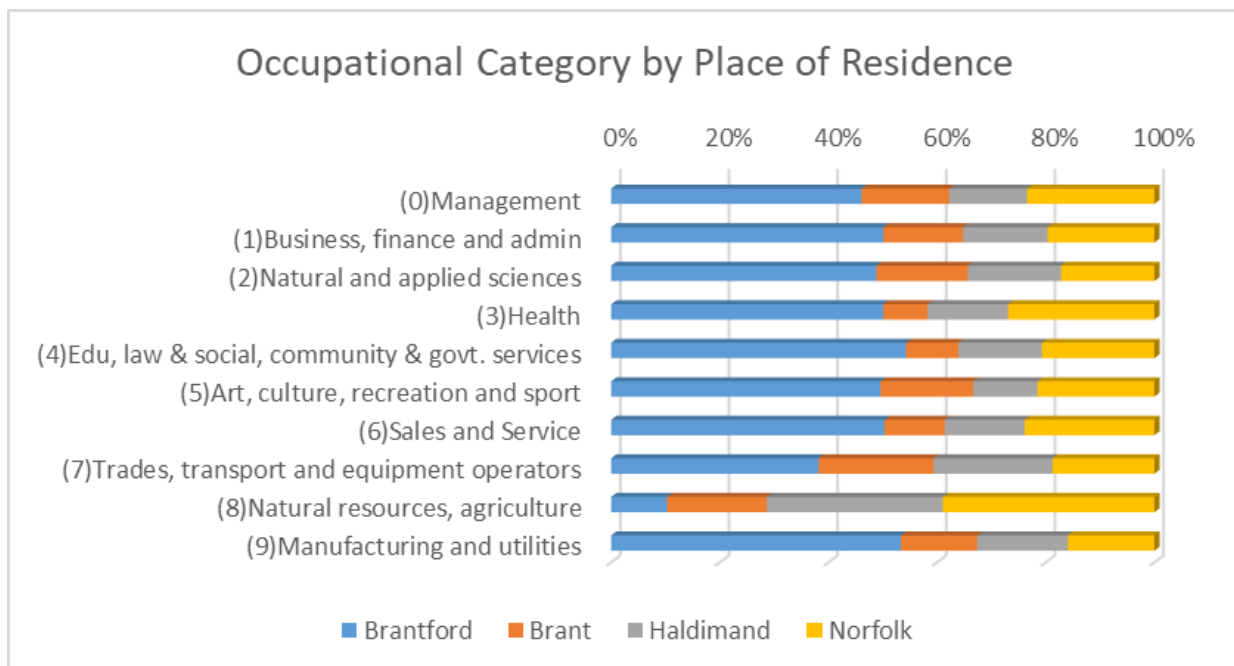


¹³ 2016 Census Custom Tables (T32)

(iii) Median Commuting Duration by Age Group¹⁴



(iv) Occupational Category by Place of Residence¹⁵



¹⁴ 2016 Census Custom Tables (T32)

¹⁵ 2016 Census Custom Tables (T31)