Hello and welcome to the virtual public information center for the Centre Wellington Transit feasibility study. My name is Dennis Kar and I'm the project manager with Dillon Consulting Limited. We are working together with the township to study how Transit can better connect the community, and we thank you for your interest in this project.

There's currently an online survey open until mid-November which can be found on connectcw.ca project page. There you can provide your feedback on options to enhance transit in the township including where, when, and how you travel. We encourage everyone, regardless of whether you see yourself as a future transit rider, to fill out the survey and share your thoughts.

The purpose of this study is to assess the need and feasibility of expanding transit services within the township. To do this, we will review the existing transit services in the township to understand any gaps in addressing mobility needs of residents. We'll identify the demand for transit options to get residents to work, school, and services, including how this will increase with planned population and employment growth. We will assess how best to meet these existing and future travel demands both within Centre Wellington and to adjacent communities such as Guelph and Kitchener. And finally, we will determine Centre Wellington's role and the cost to operate a new and expanded transit system.

We began this study this past August with a focus on understanding the existing transportation options and the needs of the community. We are now in the engagement phase, which is a crucial component of this project. To date, we have held an in-person public open house, met with several key interest holders, and initiated a community survey. By the end of the year, we will report on what we have heard during the first round of engagement and our key findings. Following this, we will begin to develop options and recommendations about whether transit should be expanded and what this should look like. This will result in a second round of engagement in early 2026, where we'll seek your feedback back on these preliminary recommendations. This feedback will be important as it allows us to know whether we got it right. Your feedback will also be used to make any required revisions to the plan before presenting it to council in the spring of 2026 where they will ultimately decide on the future of transit in Centre Wellington.

But before we get there, let's start back at the beginning and walk through what we know and the options we will consider. When considering an expanded transit system for Centre Wellington, it is important to understand the benefits that a transit service can provide. While many of you listening to this may drive, transit provides additional mobility options for those who do not have access to a car or choose not to drive. For seniors, transit allows them to age in place. For our youth, transit creates a sense of independence by providing them an option to travel in the community to access after school activities or

part-time jobs. More broadly, public transit can help address affordability concerns experienced by many residents by reducing the need to purchase a first, second or third vehicle in their household. When viable transit options are in place that allow you or members of your family to get to work, school or other activities, transit can reduce your household expense spent on a car by as much as $12,000. Transit can also help keep our downtown thriving by allowing people to access businesses without taking up limited parking space. Finally, looking into the future, the population of Center Wellington is planned to nearly double by 2051. With much of this growth concentrated in Elora, Fergus and Salem. Because of this, transit can be an important tool to reduce congestion and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by increased traffic.

Today, there are four different public transit services already operating in the township. RIDE WELL is a service provided by the county of Wellington that provides pre-booked on-demand service within the county. The use of this service has grown since it started, but there are a limited number of vehicles that are dedicated to Centre Wellington, which can make it difficult to book a ride when you need it. Guelph Owen Sound Transportation or ‘Ghost’ for short, operates two daily round trips between Owen Sound and Guelph, making one stop in both Elora and Fergus. While this provides an important connection, the limited schedule and number of stops within Centre Wellington limits its use. Also, the service is funded through a grant provided to the City of Owen Sound, which will end later in 2026. We need to better understand the value of this service and Centre Wellington's role in maintaining it. The township also operates the Elora- Fergus downtown shuttle that provides free service connecting the downtown areas between Elora and Fergus. While 30% of riders are residents, the service only operates on Fridays and weekends between the late spring and early fall. This can limit its used to access jobs, schools and services for the residents during other periods. Finally, there are several pre-booked community transportation services that provide door-to-door trips, but only individuals needing essential transportation are eligible.

To address these gaps and build on existing services, there are four main types of transit that are being explored as part of the study. Local fixed route services similar to the Elora - Fergus shuttle will be explored in the urban area areas of the township, connecting residents to key destinations. We'll also explore the potential to expand on-demand transit, similar to the service provided by RIDE WELL. This could be an expansion of RIDE WELL in partnership with the county or a separate service. We'll also explore the need to expand regional transit including increased number of trips on go service on GOST service or potential new connections to places like Kitchener. Specialized fully accessible door-to-door transit for eligible persons with disabilities that are unable able to use a fixed route service will also be reviewed to ensure all residents are able to use public transit.

For this study to be a success, we need to hear from you. The online survey included in the Township's web page includes a number of important questions that will help us plan a solution that fits the needs of Centre Wellington residents. And we encourage you to fill it out whether you currently take transit or not.

For both transit users and those who do currently take transit, the survey asks what is important to you. If you were to design a service, what are the key attributes you would prioritize? Is it affordability, services that are well connected or those that are fast that direct? Understanding these values will help us develop a vision for the transit service plan.

Your feedback on key destinations that you visit will also be important to understand. Locally, we are looking at the best options to connect to Elora, Fergus and Salem. as well as ensuring rural areas of the township have adequate access to accessible transit options. Whether these are major employers, healthcare, recreation, grocery stores or other key destinations, we want to recommend a service that most effectively serves the most crucial destinations within the township.

Regionally, we are looking to know where you most frequently travel outside of Centre Wellington. Your feedback will help us understand how connections to surrounding destinations could be implemented most effectively and how much service might be needed to these different destinations.

So I encourage all of you to visit the study website to learn more, fill out the survey and provide your ideas. There will be multiple ways to engage throughout the project. If you do have any questions or additional comments, you can also email either myself or the township project manager Colin Baker. Our emails are included on the project website and we would love to hear from you. So on behalf of the entire project team, I appreciate you taking the time to learn more about this project and completing the online survey. We encourage you to keep checking the study website for more information including how to get involved. Thank you.