

SAUGEEN MOBILITY

and REGIONAL TRANSIT

GENERAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Friday, November 14, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Boardroom, 603 Bruce Rd 19, Walkerton, ON & via Zoom

Board Members Present: Kym Hutcheon, Deputy Mayor, Brockton, Chair
Ed McGugan, Councillor, Huron-Kinloss, past Chair
Warren Dickert, Deputy Mayor, Hanover
Scott Mackey, Mayor, Chatsworth
John Divinski, Councillor, Saugeen Shores
Joel Loughead, Councillor, Grey Highlands (via Zoom)
Jennifer Shaw, Deputy Mayor, Arran-Elderslie, Vice Chair (via Zoom)
Monica Singh-Soares, Councillor, Southgate (via Zoom)

Absent members: Doug Townsend, Councillor, West Grey
Mike Hinchberger, Councillor, Kincardine

Others Present: Matt Meade, Bruce County (via Zoom)
Stephan Labelle, Manager

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None declared.

3. Approval of Agenda Motion

Motion Moved by Ed McGugan; Seconded by John Divinski

That the agenda be accepted as presented.

Carried

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – October 10, 2025

Motion Moved by Scott Mackey; Seconded by Warren Dickert

That the minutes from October 10, 2025 be approved as presented.

Carried

5. Delegations

Stephanie Stewart - Bruce, Dufferin, Grey, Wellington (BDGW) Regional Transit Study update
Stephanie provided an update on BDGW Regional Transit Study. She reported that Grey County Council approved continued operation of the Grey Transit Route (GTR) and the Guelph Owen Sound Transit (GOST) connection until August 31, 2026, without increasing its financial contribution beyond the \$145,000 previously committed for 2026. Additional costs will be covered by the Ontario Transit Investment Fund (OTIF). Ridership has been recovering following September schedule adjustments. She stressed the importance of sustaining ridership levels until a long-term regional model is implemented in 2030. She also outlined the progress of the transit study, noting that consultants are preparing open houses, stakeholder meetings, focus groups, and pop-up events across all four participating counties. Naming the study was discussed with several alternatives proposed to better reflect participating counties. She reassured the board that SMART will maintain its independence throughout the process, with any future integration to

occur only through mutual agreements. She also confirmed that previous transit studies have already been provided to consultants to avoid duplication and that the study will explore long-term funding strategies, including the possibility of pooled gas-tax allocation. The study will also propose a new governance structure with equal representation from all counties and SMART.

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

A. Host Municipality

The board discussed the selection of a host municipality for SMART's gas tax administration. It was noted that Bruce County's CAO had discussed the matter but were waiting to see whether Grey County would take it on. Some members also questioned whether all Grey County municipalities had formally reviewed the hosting request at their council tables, indicating the need for clearer communication. After further discussion, the board agreed that Bruce County is the most appropriate municipality to approach.

Motion Moved by Ed McGugan; Seconded by John Divinski

That the Manager send a letter to the Bruce County Warden and Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to determine its interest in serving as the Host County for SMART.

Carried

7. Correspondence – none

8. New Business

A. Personal use of Saugeen Mobility phones

The board reviewed recent challenges related to staff cell phones used for SMART operations. In one case, a device remained locked to a former employee's Google account, which prevented SMART from access until the individual returned. Another phone belonged to a former employee and contained personal banking details, creating privacy and liability concerns. The proposed policy requires that SMART phones be used strictly for professional purposes, remain fully accessible to management, and contain no personal data with formalized offboarding procedures.

Motion Moved by Jennifer Shaw; Seconded by Ed McGugan

That the Personal use of Saugeen Mobility phones policy be adopted as presented.

Carried

9. Reports and Recommendations

A. Report on September 2025 operations

Motion Moved by Ed McGugan; Seconded by Warren Dickert

That the report on September 2025 operations be accepted as presented.

Carried

B. BDGW Regional Transit Study Partnership Agreement

The board reviewed the partnership agreement associated with SMART's participation in the BDGW Regional Transit Study. The agreement outlines SMART's responsibilities, including supporting Grey County, maintaining consistent messaging regarding transit initiatives, and providing required documentation. Board members sought clarification on whether consistent messaging would limit SMART's ability to express disagreement. Termination clauses remain available should the organization determine that continued participation is no longer appropriate. Despite questions about why Wellington County was not listed in certain sections (it will eventually be integrated into the study), there were no significant concerns.

Motion Moved by Joel Lougheed; Seconded by John Divinski
That the Board endorse the Manager to sign the partnership with the network.

Carried

C. Engagement Agreement

The board reviewed the upcoming public engagement schedule for the GDGW Regional Transit Study, which will include in-person sessions in multiple communities and a virtual event scheduled for January 12th. A workshop for councilors will take place prior to the public session. The board discussed whether SMART should host its own client-focused sessions but concluded that directing riders to the virtual meeting may be more inclusive given accessibility barriers and SMART still maintain a visible presence at regional events.


10. Closed Session – none

11. Adjournment & Upcoming Meeting Date – Friday, December 19, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Motion Moved by Scott Mackey; Seconded by Monica Singh-Soares

That the Board meeting be adjourned as of 11:56 a.m.

Carried

 12/19/2025

Kym Hutcheon, Chair

 12/19/2025

Cassandra Cesco, Recording Secretary

SAUGEEN MOBILITY

and REGIONAL TRANSIT

GENERAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 10:00 a.m.
via Zoom

Board Members Present: Kym Hutcheon, Deputy Mayor, Brockton, Chair
Ed McGugan, Councillor, Huron-Kinloss, past Chair
Warren Dickert, Deputy Mayor, Hanover
Scott Mackey, Mayor, Chatsworth
John Divinski, Councillor, Saugeen Shores
Joel Loughhead, Councillor, Grey Highlands (via Zoom)
Monica Singh-Soares, Councillor, Southgate (via Zoom)
Doug Townsend, Councillor, West Grey
Mike Hinchberger, Councillor, Kincardine

Absent members: Jennifer Shaw, Deputy Mayor, Arran-Elderslie

Others Present: Stephan Labelle, Manager

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None declared.

3. Approval of Agenda Motion

Motion Moved by Doug Townsend; Seconded by Ed McGugan

That the agenda be accepted as presented.

Carried

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – November 14, 2025 - deferred

5. Delegations – Carolyn Laitinen, Executive Director Home & Community Support Services

Coordination and the potential partnership between Home and Community Support Services (HCSS) and Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit (SMART) were discussed. The discussion focused on exploring opportunities for alignment while maintaining service integrity and accessibility. It was agreed that further discussions are required and that this work should continue.

Motion Moved by Ed McGugan; Seconded by Scott Mackey

That the Manager continue discussions with HCSS on coordination and potential partnership.

Carried

Motion Moved by Mike Hinchberger; Seconded by Scott Mackey

That the Manager prepare a draft letter, for the Chair's review and consideration, outlining the current position of SMART within the BDGW Regional Transit Study.

Carried

6. Business Arising from the Minutes – deferred

7. Correspondence – deferred

8. New Business - deferred

9. Reports and Recommendations - deferred

10. Closed Session – none

11. Adjournment & Upcoming Meeting Date – Friday, December 19, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Motion Moved by Mike Hinchberger; Seconded by John Divinski

That the Board meeting be adjourned as of 10:58 a.m.

Carried



12/19/2025

Kym Hutcheon, Chair



12/19/2025

Stephan Labelle, Recording Secretary

SAUGEEN MOBILITY

and REGIONAL TRANSIT

GENERAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Friday, December 19, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Boardroom, 603 Bruce Rd 19, Walkerton, ON & via Zoom

Board Members Present: Kym Hutcheon, Deputy Mayor, Brockton, Chair (via Zoom)
Warren Dickert, Deputy Mayor, Hanover
Doug Townsend, Councillor, West Grey (via Zoom)
John Divinski, Councillor, Saugeen Shores (via Zoom)
Scott Mackey, Mayor, Chatsworth
Mike Hinchberger, Councillor, Kincardine (via Zoom)
Joel Loughead, Councillor, Grey Highlands (via Zoom)
Ed McGugan, Councillor, Huron-Kinloss, past Chair (via Zoom)
Jennifer Shaw, Deputy Mayor, Arran-Elderslie, Vice Chair (via Zoom)
Monica Singh-Soares, Councillor, Southgate (via Zoom)

Others Present: Stephan Labelle, Manager
Joanne Cook, HCSS (via Zoom)
Carolyn Laitinen, HCSS (via Zoom)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None declared.

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion Moved by: Warren Dickert; Seconded by Scott Mackey

That the agenda be approved as presented.

Carried

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – November 14, 2025

Motion Moved by: John Divinski; Seconded by: Mike Hinchberger.

That the minutes from November 14, 2025 be approved as presented.

Carried

5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – December 10, 2025

A recommendation was made to use the word “partnership” when referring to the ongoing evaluation of the relationship between HCSS and SMART. Board members expressed agreement with this.

Motion Moved by: Ed McGugan; Seconded by: Mike Hinchberger.

That the minutes from December 10, 2025 be approved as amended.

Carried

6. Delegation – Stephan Labelle, as replacement for Stephanie Stewart (BDGW Regional Transit Study Team)

The Manager provided a detailed update on recent discussions with the BDGW Regional Transit Study Team following the submission of SMART’s letter outlining concerns and considerations. He explained the benefit of a SMART/HCSS partnership model were presented to the Study Team. He also outlined risks,

particularly with the potential requirement to adopt a low-fare model that could significantly increase municipal contributions. He pointed out that SMART would likely keep its gas tax funding by remaining independent, while also noting that its older fleet vehicles could be transferred to the new integrated organization through a mutual agreement.

It was noted that no final decisions regarding contractors or fare systems have been made. He confirmed that further discussions are planned and summarized the current public engagement phase of the study, including postcard distribution, posters, surveys, a live website, social media outreach, and scheduled virtual and in-person engagement events throughout January. Educational sessions for the councillors will be recorded and made available afterward.

Carolyn provided an update from the HCSS perspective, noting that their Executive Committee met recently and expressed strong interest in exploring partnership opportunities with SMART. She advised that HCSS has scheduled a meeting with the Ministry of Health to better understand partnership models, funding considerations, fare implications, and risks related to maintaining transportation independence. She noted that HCSS supports reviewing all options thoroughly and ensuring due diligence before any commitments be made.

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

A. Host municipality

The Board received confirmation that Bruce County has agreed to act as host for SMART's gas tax funding.

Motion Moved by: John Divinski; Seconded by: Monica Singh-Soares

That Bruce County be designated as the Host County for Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit (SMART) for the purpose of administering SMART's Gas Tax funding.

Carried

B. BDGW Regional Transit Study

Following the Delegation discussion, the Board confirmed its direction to remain engaged with the Study Team.

Motion Moved by: Jennifer Shaw; Seconded by: Doug Townsend

That the Manager continue to work collaboratively with the Study Team and provide regular updates to the Board.

Carried

8. Correspondence – Email from Loucks & Loucks on Articles of Amendment

Correspondence from Loucks & Loucks was reviewed regarding the Articles of Amendment. The amendments increase the maximum number of Directors to 15 and expand SMART's mandate to allow transportation of accompanying family members or friends (and charge them for the ride), excluding support persons, who will continue to ride free.

9. New Business

A. HCSS and SMART update

Further discussion regarding the HCSS and SMART relationship included governance status and confirmation that SMART continues to operate as a not-for-profit organization rather than a local board. No further communication has been received from the Ombudsman of Ontario since legal counsel provided clarification in July.

Motion Moved by: Mike Hinchberger; Seconded by: Monica Singh-Soares

That the update on HCSS and SMART be accepted as presented.

Carried

10. Reports and Recommendations

A. Report on October and November 2025 operations

The Manager presented the operations report for October and November 2025. October saw a 5% decrease in rides, a 4% decrease in fees, and a 10% decrease in billed kilometers. November showed a 9% decrease in rides, a 12% decrease in fees, and a 13% decrease in billed kilometers. The cause of the decline was unclear but feedback from riders continue to be positive.

Motion Moved by: Joel Lougheed; Seconded by: Ed McGugan

That the Report on October and November 2025 operations be accepted as presented.

Carried

11. Closed Session – none

12. Adjournment & Upcoming Meeting Date – January 9, 2026, 10AM

Motion Moved by: Doug Townsend; Seconded by: Mike Hinchberger

That the Board meeting be adjourned as of 10:38 AM.

Carried



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Kym Hutcheon, Chair



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Cassandra Cesco, Recording Secretary