

# Innisfil, Ont., chooses Uber over buses in Canadian first

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An Ontario town is the first in Canada to partner with Uber in an effort to solve its public transit challenges.

Innisfil, a town of approximately 36,000 north of Toronto, is teaming up with the ridesharing service to cover all of its public transit needs, rather than paying for a bus service. The municipal government is subsidizing rides in the small community, so riders will only pay an average of \$3 to get a lift through Uber Pool.

"Being able to match two or more rides going in the same direction was really the answer," town planner Paul Pentikainen told CTV Ottawa.

Pentikainen called it an "outside the box" solution that will only cost the town an estimated \$100,000 a year, which is far less expensive than the estimated \$270,000 cost of maintaining a bus.

Innisfil is the first community in Canada to enter into an official partnership with Uber. However, it's unclear whether other communities will follow suit.

Toronto Mayor John Tory has said he's open to discussions with Uber, but that city already has a robust transit network of buses, streetcars, subways and light rail transit.

Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson suggests Uber is not the solution to transit challenges in his city. "We're investing billions of dollars into rail and we really want to drive people to public transit, and not to individual cars," he told CTV Ottawa.

Other communities around Ottawa appear lukewarm, at best, about the idea. Brockville says such a partnership is "not likely" in the near future, while Kingston says it doesn't see an Uber partnership as "feasible."

The mayor of Carleton Place, a town of 10,000, says he's open to "anything that enhances our existing transportation model."

Uber has partnered with towns in other countries to solve their transit problems as well. Last year, for instance, the city of Summit, N.J., partnered with Uber to subsidize rides into Manhattan for commuters who could not find parking at Summit's transit station. Pinellas Park, Fla., and Centennial, Col., have also struck deals with ridesharing services to ease the pressure on their transit systems.