



2021/22 Student Transit Pass Pilot Program

Origin

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to begin planning a Student Transit Pass Pilot Program by meeting with the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) and Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial (CSAP) officials to discuss potential partnership opportunities, program details, timelines, logistics, marketing and costs



Background: The Kingston Model

- In 2012, Kingston City Council approved a pilot project that provided grade 9 students from schools governed by two school boards with free transit passes.
- Today, all grade 9 to 12 high school students in Kingston receive free transit passes, along with an onboard orientation session.



Background: The Kingston Model

- Providing high school students with access to fully subsidized transit passes costs approximately \$250,000 per year.
- The costs are offset in part by a combined contribution of \$60,000 from the two school boards and an additional \$100,000 to 125,000 from the Ontario Gas Tax Fund for each year of the program.



Discussion

- In August 2019, Halifax Regional Council directed Halifax Transit to engage with HRCE and CSAP to develop a program
- Staff have worked with CSAP and HRCE to identify candidate schools and understand network implications of additional significant ridership.



Halifax

Regional Centre for Education



Conseil scolaire
acadien provincial

Recommended Approach

It is recommended that the program be introduced in three phases as described in the following slides.



Phase 1: Implementation & Learning

- Limited to one grade at four select schools, currently well served by Halifax Transit services.
 - › Two CSAP, two HRCE
- Last between six and 18 months begin as soon as feasible (targeting March or April 2021).



Phase 1: Low Risk Implementation

- Phase 1 is offered at no cost to HRCE and CSAP.
- HT to observe and understand impact of new ridership to network.
- Unknowns as to overloads, significant additional ridership.
- Trip patterns for students are unknown so can't estimate impact of broader program roll out.
- HRCE has expressed desire to skip this phase.



Phase 2: Program Expansion

- An expanded pilot program would be extended to the remaining grades within the four pilot schools.
- The program would launch in three to six additional high schools (well served by transit).
- Details of the Pilot Phase 2 will be dependent on the findings of survey and data collected in Phase 1.



Phase 2: Program Expansion

- A formal funding agreement between the school organizations and the municipality will be required.
- The intent is to return to Regional Council with findings of the Phase 1 pilot, and recommendations for proceeding with Phase 2, within twelve months.



Phase 3: Full Program Roll Out

The objective is to create a permanent program offered to all middle and high schools that are served by Halifax Transit.



Financial Implications

- Approximately 530 students would participate in Pilot Phase 1.
- Anticipated revenue loss for Phase 1 is \$16,000 to \$24,000 annually.
- Anticipated that Phase 2 will be cost neutral



Next Steps

- Launch Phase one of the program spring 2021
- Initiate development of funding agreement; return to Council with bylaw amendments



Staff Recommendation

It is recommended that Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Approve the Student Transit Pass Pilot Program as described in this report; and
2. Adopt By-law U-108, the purpose of which is to amend By-law U-100, the User Charges By-law, to enable the Student Transit Pass Pilot Program, as set out in Attachment C to this report.