



BAYRIDES: SO MUCH MORE THAN A TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

Submitted by BayRides with support from MusgoRider (Eastern Shore and Valley Sheet Harbour) and East Hants Community Rider

"BayRides made my son feel like he was part of the community. For him, BayRides means inclusion."

"Without BayRides, I wouldn't be able to work. It's as simple as that."

BayRides serves 18,000 people in HRM around St Margaret's Bay. BayRides provides transportation to work, medical appointments, grocery stores, social activities, and supports the Food Bank and the Seniors Association.

BayRides is at risk.

We are squeezed between rising operating costs across the board, especially fuel, and static funding. We will face a deficit at the end of the fiscal year.

- 51% of our operating costs are directly related to having our vehicles on the road.
- Fuel accounts for 60% of our vehicle expenses
- Fares account for only 20% of revenue.
- Government-based funding accounts for 54% of our total revenue. We rely heavily on provincial and municipal funding programs such as the Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP) and Rural Transit Funding Program (RTFP).
- The remaining 26% of revenue comes from weekly fundraising and our donation drives.

The funding model that HRM uses to support HRM RTAs has not changed in many years. In that time inflation has increased 6% and our fuel costs have soared by 30%.

Why don't we increase our fares?

Many of the people we serve are working poor, seniors on fixed incomes, and those most vulnerable in our community. We are committed to providing transportation, regardless of means. Many more people are seeking support from our Fare Assistance Program than was the case three years ago. Demand for fare assistance consistently exceeds what we have available.

If we increase fares, we will further isolate people, making it difficult for them to get to essential medical appointments, to drug stores to get prescriptions filled, to get to work, to obtain food, or to attend social events that give them a sense of companionship, inclusion and worth.

"We are very aware of the huge need which BayRides fills in transporting seniors in St Margaret's Bay to and from medical and hospital appointments in central Halifax." - Pat Rodee, SMB Seniors Association.

BayRides is not just for seniors

The largest percentage of BayRides clients use the service to get to work, both within the community and by connecting with the Metro X. (Double the next highest service level).

Bay Rides provides free delivery for Food Bank orders, to clients who do not have reliable transportation.

"With the continued housing crisis, food crisis, low wages for workers, high inflation and new taxes hikes, there has been an extreme increase in demand for food support. Bay Rides helps relieve part of the burden that our local community members face every day." - Ruth Minnikin, Manager, St Margaret's Bay Food Bank.

Looking to the future.

The province wants to double our population to 2 million by 2060. An enormous part of that growth is going to be in HRM and areas like St Margaret's Bay, Eastern Shore, Valley Sheet Harbour, and East Hants. That increased population will need transportation. It is essential to secure the viability of BayRides, MusgoRider and the Community Rider not just for today, but for the long-term prosperity of our communities, the municipality, and the province.

What are we looking for from HRM?

We are asking for support for an increase in the existing funding model: an increase in the base funding, and an increase in the cents-per-km rate.

We seek your support to increase base funding from \$10,000 to \$25,000, and to increase the cents-per-km rate from \$0.50 to \$0.62.

This is about more than transportation.

- It's about safeguarding people's health - physical and mental.
- It's about giving people the dignity of getting to work, even when they struggle to pay the fare.
- It's about enabling people to age in place, to stay in the family home, surrounded by friends and relatives, even when mobility is compromised, and they hang up the car keys.
- It's about maintaining social cohesion, by getting people to libraries, and luncheon clubs, and generally maintaining the fabric of a vibrant, supportive, community.
- It's about making sure our neighbours don't go without, even when they are not able themselves to go grocery shopping or pick up their prescriptions.
- It's the community service that says - if you can't get to the Food Bank, we'll bring the Food Bank to you.

An increase in funding from this municipality would go a long way to ensuring the future of the service we provide to our community - the social service as well as the transportation service.

"BayRides has been a really great service for helping both the elderly and for people with physical and mental disabilities for transportation in the Bay Area. If it weren't for them, I don't know how I would be able to leave my home and go to places like the gym, go grocery shopping for myself, or even be able to go have a working job in the Bay area for employment. Please continue supporting Bay Rides so that people like me can have the ability to go anywhere in the Bay for the long foreseeable future." - [REDACTED].

Submitted by Meghan Maher - Chair, BayRides.

Email: [REDACTED]