



City of Kingston
Information Report to Environment, Infrastructure & Transportation Policies
Committee
Report Number EITP-16-003

To:	Chair and Members of the Environment, Infrastructure and Transportation Policies Committee
From:	Denis Leger, Commissioner of Transportation, Facilities & Emergency Services
Resource Staff:	Sheila Kidd, Director, Transportation Services
Date of Meeting:	March 8, 2016
Subject:	Kingston Transit Operations Plan and Fare Review – Overview

Executive Summary:

The Kingston Transit Redevelopment Plan (the “Plan”) was adopted by City Council in 2011. The Plan has served as the primary operational document for Kingston Transit for the past five years (2011–2015). The Plan included the introduction of three Express routes implemented in two phases. With the implementation of the three Express routes, the Plan has been substantially completed.

A comprehensive Transit and Parking rate review was completed in 2013. The review resulted in a new Kingston Transit fare structure. The Plan identified that transit fares should be reviewed every three years.

This report outlines the guiding principles, process, and timelines for:

- i. the preparation and presentation of an operations plan for Kingston Transit for the next five years (2017–2021) and;
- ii. the completion of a Transit fare review

It is anticipated that the operations plan, fare review, and associated recommendations will be completed by the end of August 2016.

Recommendation:

This report is for information purposes only.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Denis Leger, Commissioner,
Transportation, Facilities &
Emergency Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Gerard Hunt, Chief Administrative Officer

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Cynthia Beach, Corporate & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Lanie Hurdle, Community Services	Not required
Jim Keech, President and CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desiree Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

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Options/Discussion:

Background

In 2011, City Council adopted the Kingston Transit Redevelopment Plan, which contained two phases to be implemented in 2013 and 2015, with the following improvements:

- three new Express bus routes that link the City's urban areas with fast, reliable service that operate on a 15-minute frequency during the weekday peak periods and at a 30-minute frequency at other times
- modifications to the existing local routes to align the service to the new Express routes
- an expansion of the transit fleet from 48 to 63 buses
- the addition or upgrading of bus stops with accessible concrete pads, shelters, and benches

The first phase of the Plan was completed in September 2013, and included the introduction of the first Express routes (Routes 501/502). The second phase of the Plan was completed in May 2015, and included the introduction of two additional Express routes (Route 601/602, 701/702). Local routes were added and/or realigned in each phase to support the Express routes. The fleet was expanded from 48 buses to 63 buses to support the service changes over the two phases. With the introduction of the Express routes in May 2015, the Plan has been substantially completed.

In 2013, City Council adopted a new fare structure for Kingston Transit based on a comprehensive Transit and Parking rate review completed by Transportation Services staff. The fare structure maintained traditional fare types and it introduced fare types and pricing intended to promote the use of alternate modes of transportation and discourage the use of automobiles, particularly single-occupancy vehicles used for commuter travel. The Plan identified that Transit fares should be reviewed every three years.

This report outlines the guiding principles, process, and timelines for:

- i) the preparation and presentation of an operations plan for Kingston Transit for the next 5 years (2017–2021)
- ii) the completion of a Transit fare review

The operations plan and fare review, including public consultation, will be completed concurrently because of the close relationship between service levels (costs) and fares (revenues). This blended approach is typical of the way in which other transit systems conduct operational and fare reviews.

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Kingston Transit Operations Plan – Overview

At a minimum, the operations plan will include the following components:

- a review of the current transit service
- a review of City policies, particularly land use and transportation policies, related to the delivery of transit service
- recommendations for transit service, including route additions/changes, route frequency, and service hours
- a five-year implementation plan
- a financial model aligned to the recommendations and implementation plan

The preparation of the operations plan will be guided by the following principles previously established by Council:

Kingston’s Strategic Plan (2015 – 2018) – The operations plan will reflect Council’s “plan a liveable city” strategic priority: *Quality of life and the positive characteristics of a city make it liveable. The concept of liveability embraces balancing the four pillars of sustainability and promoting community engagement and pride.* Further, the operations plan will support Council’s direction to “expand and improve public transit” in this strategic priority area.

2015 Kingston Transportation Master Plan (KTMP) – Council Motion – December 1, 2015 – The operations plan will take into consideration the transit targets identified in the 2015 KTMP motion passed by Council on December 1, 2015 as follows:

***That** the City of Kingston set an aspirational transit target to achieve 15% of all trips made during the daily peak travel period by 2034 and that as an interim step to this target, staff be directed to develop the next 5 year Transit Plan with the objective of increasing transit ridership from 4.2M annual trips to 5.6M annual trips by 2021;*

Transit Vision – The operations plan will maintain the vision established in the 2013 Transit Redevelopment Plan:

Our vision is to make Kingston Transit a network-driven and market-focused organization that provides a transit service that all citizens of Kingston choose to use in support of the City’s Sustainability Plan and transportation policies. Kingston Transit is a viable transportation choice that is competitive with the automobile in terms of comfort, convenience, reliability, and travel time.

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Kingston Transit Fare Review – Overview

All of the current fare policies established by the Transit fare review in 2013 will be reviewed. In addition, the fare review will address previous direction provided by Council related to fares as follows:

Grade 9–12 Free Transit Pilot Program – The fare review will make a recommendation regarding the pilot program consistent with the motion of Council passed on June 16, 2015:

***That** Council direct staff to evaluate the operational and financial impacts of the pilot program and make recommendations regarding a secondary school student transit program with funding source considerations for the 2016/2017 academic year, and the 2017 municipal budget year, as part of the overall planned transit fare review to be undertaken in 2016;*

The fare review will not be completed in time to make a decision on the Grade 9–12 program for the 2016/2017 academic year therefore staff will present a separate report to City Council in Q2 2016, with considerations and financing options for continuing the program for the 2016/2017 academic year.

Affordable Transit: The fare review will address the motion of Council passed on September 15, 2015, related to affordable transit passes:

***Whereas** there are approximately 12,000 Kingston residents living under the Low Income Cut Off (LICO) which is \$15,600/year and the average base benefit for an adult receiving Ontario Works is \$656/month (\$7,872/year); and*

***Whereas** the 77% of Kingston residents living under LICO who do not qualify for the Medical Travel and Transportation Benefit or discretionary funds for employment-related travel pay \$46.50 for a monthly, Affordable Transit Pass; and*

***Whereas** the current Affordable Transit Pass offers only a 35% discount and at least 12 comparable cities in Ontario offer discounts of 50% or higher; and*

***Whereas** transportation plays an important role in a resident's ability to improve their economic, social and health outcomes and free or affordable transit are therefore essential to the development of a liveable city;*

***Therefore Be It Resolved** That Council ask staff to provide more affordable transit options for residents under the LICO, including free off-peak service, and report back to the Environment Infrastructure & Transportation Policies Committee no later than Q3, 2016*

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Older Adults (Seniors) – Travel Training Sessions – Complimentary Passes: The fare review will address the motion of Council passed on September 1, 2015 related to older adults (seniors):

***That** older adults who participate in the upcoming Kingston Transit travel training sessions be granted a one-month Senior bus pass or a multi-ride card of equivalent value to use on Kingston Transit; and*

***That** staff monitors the effectiveness and cost of the older adult training sessions, and the practice of providing complimentary passes to participants, and include this information as part of the 2016 fare review report.*

Operations Plan and Fare Review Process:

Transportation Services staff will lead the preparation and presentation of the operations plan and fare review. An internal group of City staff, including representatives from Planning, Engineering, Finance, Housing & Social Services, and Communications will act in an advisory capacity, with other departments consulted as necessary. A committee of Kingston Transit bus operators has also been selected to provide input.

Transit staff will work with Communications to develop and implement a public engagement plan, which will include an opportunity to discuss the operations plan and fares, and gather input from the general public and community stakeholders. In addition, Transit staff will be facilitating pop-up surveys at key locations, including transit transfer points, to provide transit passengers with an opportunity to provide direct input into the process. The public engagement plan will identify further opportunities for public engagement that will occur between mid-April and the end of May, prior to the draft plan being finalized.

The kick-off to the public engagement process will occur on Thursday, April 14. Dr. Jeffrey Casello will facilitate a public information session focused on current best practices in public transit and how they can be applied to Kingston. Dr. Casello is recognized as one of Canada's foremost experts in public transportation. He is the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies in the Faculty of Environment, and Associate Professor in the School of Planning and Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Waterloo. Dr. Casello and his team provided expert guidance to Transit staff in the development of the 2011 Transit Redevelopment Plan.

Timelines:

It is anticipated that the operations plan, fare review, and recommendations will be presented to the EITP Committee and Council prior to 2017 budget deliberations. The project timelines are outlined in the following chart:

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Task	Date
Overview report presented to EITP Committee	March 8, 2016
Public engagement activities	April–May 2016
Preparation of operations plan, fare review and recommendations	June–July 2016
Operations plan, fare review and recommendations presented to EITP/Council	August 2016

Existing Policy/By Law:

Not applicable.

Notice Provisions:

Not applicable.

Accessibility Considerations:

The operations plan will be developed with regard to the City's accessibility policies and legislative requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The IASR came into effect in 2011 and is subject to a five-year review. The Minister of Economic Development, Employment, and Infrastructure has established a standards development committee to review the IASR in 2016. The operations plan and fare review will reflect any changes, or anticipated changes, to the IASR. Kingston Transit staff is participating on the resource committee of Ontario transit agencies who will provide feedback and input into the IASR review.

Financial Considerations:

The operations plan will include a financial model aligned to the fare review and the implementation plan.

The impact to the 2017, 2018, and subsequent years' municipal operating budgets is undetermined at this time. It should be noted that the achievement of a 15% modal split for transit by 2034 would likely require an additional investment, beyond the tax rate increase (2.5%) parameter established by Council.

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

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Paige Agnew, Director Planning, Building & Licensing
Steven Dickey, Director, Financial Services
Marielle LaPlante-Wheeler, Manager Communications & Client Services
Sheldon Laidman, Director Housing & Social Services
Cheryl Hitchen, Manager, Social Policy & Strategic Community Development
Ian Semple, Manager Service Development
Andrew Morton, Transit Service Project Manager

Exhibits Attached:

Not applicable.