



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 19-225**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Sheila Kidd, Commissioner Transportation & Public Works
Resource Staff: Jeremy DaCosta, Director - Transit & Fleet Services
Date of Meeting: August 13, 2019
Subject: Kingston Transit – Secondary School Transit Program – 3-Year Program Extension – 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022

Executive Summary:

The City of Kingston (Kingston Transit) provides complimentary transit access to all Grade 9–12 students attending a secondary school, or a private secondary school in the City of Kingston, or being home educated. The objective of the program is to provide high school students with the opportunity to use the Kingston Transit system to increase the potential for students to continue as committed public transit users when they are no longer eligible for the program. The Limestone District School Board (LDSB) and Algonquin Lakeshore District Catholic School Board (ALDSCB) each provide a financial contribution to the program.

The secondary school transit program was initiated in 2012 and has been in effect since that time. In May 2016, Council approved the continuation of the program for an additional 3-year period (2016/2017, 2017/2018, 2018/2019), subject to LDSB and ALDSCB continuing to make a combined financial contribution of \$60,000 in each year of the program (Report Number 16-142).

Over the last 3 years, secondary school students have taken between 500,000 and 600,000 passenger trips on Kingston Transit annually. In 2018, the City was recognized by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) with a Sustainable Community Award in transportation for the secondary school program. The City also received FCM's inaugural Inspire Award for a project that best demonstrates creativity and innovation. A research study of the secondary school program completed in 2017 found that, as students become older and gain experience with public transit, they become more frequent transit users.

Given the continued success of the program, this reports recommends the extension of the secondary school program for an additional 3-year period (2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022),

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subject to LDSB and ALDSCB continuing their combined contribution of \$60,000 in each year of the program. Representatives of LDSB and ALDCSB have confirmed their commitment to continue their current level of funding for the 3-year period.

Recommendation:

That Council continue the complimentary Grade 9 to Grade 12 transit program for a 3-year period (2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022), including students attending public, separate, or private schools in the City of Kingston, or students receiving a home-based education in the City of Kingston, subject to the City of Kingston receiving a total combined financial contribution of \$60,000 each year from the Limestone District School Board and Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board in support of the program.

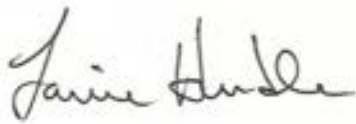
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Authorizing Signatures:



**Sheila Kidd, Commissioner,
Transportation & Public Works**



**Lanie Hurdle, Interim Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Peter Huigenbos, Acting Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Jim Keech, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required
Deanne Roberge, Acting Commissioner, Corporate Services	Not required

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Options/Discussion:**Background**

In June 2012, Council approved a pilot program to provide complimentary access to Kingston Transit for all Grade 9 students attending public and separate secondary schools within the City of Kingston. In each of the next 3 academic years, an additional grade was added until the program was expanded to include all high school students (Grades 9–12) in the 2015/2016 academic year. The program was also expanded to include students attending private schools or receiving a home-based education in the City of Kingston.

The secondary school transit program provides eligible students with access to Kingston Transit for a 12-month period from September of the current year to August of the following year. Each September, transit staff collaborate with school board representatives to attend each high school to issue Kingston Transit passes to incoming Grade 9 students and conduct transit orientation sessions.

The Limestone District School Board (LDSB) and Algonquin Lakeshore District Catholic School Board (ALDSCB) each provide a financial contribution to support the program. In May 2016, Council approved the continuation of the program for an additional 3-year period (2016/2017, 2017/2018, 2018/2019), subject to LDSB and ALDSCB continued to make a combined financial contribution of \$60,000 in each year of the program (Report Number 16-142).

Program ResultsRidership:

The program continues to be successful in encouraging high school students to use the public transit system. For the previous 3 years (2015/2016, 2016/2017, 2017/2018), secondary school students averaged 565,000 passenger trips on Kingston Transit annually. For the 2018/2019 period (ending in August 2019), it is projected that trips by secondary school students will again exceed more than 500,000 trips.

Recognition:

In 2018, the City was recognized by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) with a Sustainable Community Award in transportation for the secondary school transit program. The City also received FCM's inaugural Inspire Award for a project the best demonstrates creativity and innovation. Information about the City's awards is profiled on the FCM's website at: [Case Study](#).

In addition to receiving these awards, the City also partnered with the FCM and the LDSB to create a comprehensive guidebook to assist other communities with launching their own secondary school transit programs. The guidebook is available on FCM's website at: [Guide Book](#). City staff and LDSB representatives recently hosted a webinar about the program and guidebook. A recording of the webinar is available at: [Webinar](#).

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Research:

In 2016, the City entered into a partnership with the University of Waterloo, to conduct formalized research around the secondary school transit program. In addition to examining ridership, the research included a series of in-person and online surveys distributed to students and parents to assess the impacts of the program. The research concluded that the secondary school program is an important stimulant for travel independence for high school students and that access to a transit pass does influence a student's travel behaviour.

The research report entitled *Impact of Free Transit Passes on Youth Travel Behaviour* was completed in 2017. A full copy of the research can be accessed from the University of Waterloo's online repository: [Research Report](#).

Budgetary and Financial Considerations

As previously identified in Report Number 16-142, the secondary school transit program reduces Kingston Transit fare revenue. It is estimated that the total amount of foregone revenue (revenue that would have otherwise been collected) is approximately \$250,000 annually. A portion of the \$250,000 in foregone revenue is offset by the \$60,000 annual contribution from the LDSB and ALDSCB school boards.

The \$250,000 is further offset by the ridership generated by the program related to the level of provincial gas tax funding that the City receives. The provincial gas tax funding allocation is provided to the City on the basis of population and transit ridership. As population and ridership levels increase/decrease, relative to other municipalities, the gas tax funding also increases/decreases. The provincial gas tax funding varies year to year based on a number of factors. Given historical provincial gas tax funding levels in recent years, staff estimates that provincial gas tax funding attributed directly to the incremental ridership generated by the secondary school program is in the range of \$100,000 - \$125,000 per year.

The difference between the foregone revenue and the contributions from the school boards and the provincial gas tax leaves a gap in the range of \$65,000 - \$90,000 annually that requires ongoing funding from other sources.

2019 and Future Budget Impact

The 2019, Kingston Transit approved operating budget accounted for the secondary school transit program continuing on an ongoing basis. The 2019 and future operating budgets have continued to recognize and account for the reduction in revenue.

Existing Policy/By-law:

Not applicable.

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Notice Provisions:

Not applicable.

Accessibility Considerations:

Not applicable.

Financial Considerations:

The total annual cost (foregone revenue) of providing complimentary transit to all secondary school students has been estimated at \$250,000. A portion of these costs (foregone revenues) is offset by a \$60,000 annual contribution by the school boards and an estimated increase of \$100,000 - \$125,000 in provincial gas tax funding, as a result of increased ridership attributed to the high school program.

The 2019 Kingston Transit approved operating budget accounted for the secondary school transit program continuing on an ongoing basis. The 2019 and future operating budgets have continued to recognize and account for the \$65,000 - \$90,000 reduction in revenue.

Contacts:

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Not applicable.

Exhibits Attached:

Not applicable.