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To: All Members of the Halton District School Board, Halton Catholic District School Board, Conseil Scolaire Viamonde, Halton Student Transportation Services, Burlington Transit

From: Mayor Marianne Meed Ward

Date: September 11, 2019

Re: Statement of Interest Regarding Free Transit for Burlington Students

There is interest from City of Burlington Mayor Marianne Meed Ward to explore the option of free transit for high school students in Burlington, to be implemented as early as the 2020 budget (if feasible).

This is based on the positive community response of free transit for seniors and low-income residents, implemented in the 2019 budget, and in response to requests to expand free fares to students.

The goals of free fares include: removing some of the barriers to taking transit; getting vehicles off the road; reducing Green House Gas emissions from vehicle trips driving students to and from school; introducing students to transit so they become lifelong riders; and working toward achieving our modal split of 15% non-car travel trips among all users.

Based on our recent meeting, held on July 17 at Burlington City Hall, there is interest from staff and Burlington trustees at the Halton District School Board, Halton Catholic District School Board, and French-language public school board Conseil Scolaire Viamonde to explore free transit for students.

The Boards currently buy student bus passes. The City of Burlington would be looking to the boards to continue to provide a similar contribution to help defray some of the city's costs of providing free transit to students. The funding formula, and any changes over time, would be negotiated.

The Boards receive funding from Halton Region for split passes and would be looking to the Region to continue that contribution. The Region would be included in further discussions, as they were not represented at the initial meeting on July 17.

The free transit program would be available to all students, 24/7, but the primary goal is reach those not eligible for yellow bus service (for example, those who live within 0 to 3.2 kilometres from their school) and who may be driven to school now. Yellow bus service would continue.

Fares would be free on both conventional and Handivan buses (as per AODA rules).


We would seek partnerships with local groups (for example, Burlington For Accessible and Sustainable Transit – BFAST, and BurlingtonGreen) to help amplify awareness, education and marketing of this service.

The agreement for free transit, and its implementation and funding would have an established, periodic review process.

The City of Burlington is seeking an “expression of interest” from each board of Trustees and Burlington City Council to proceed with further discussions. Once there is a green light, a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would be developed outlining the program, costs, and commitments in more detail, and brought back to the respective four boards (English and French, Public and Catholic) and City Council for final ratification, followed by implementation.

Please see Appendix B for minutes from the July 17 meeting at Burlington City Hall.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marianne Meed Ward". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward