



SUBJECT: Free Transit for Students

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Office of the Mayor

Report Number: MO-19-19

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 155-03-17

Date to Committee: December 2, 2019

Date to Council: December 16, 2019

Recommendation:

Receive and file the update on MOU discussions with all related school boards (public and Catholic) to further partnership terms and funding towards student transit passes and appoint Councillors Rory Nisan and _____ to the MOU discussion team.

Consider as part of the 2020 budget discussions free transit for students age 12 and under, to take effect January 1st to align with Metrolinx fare changes in March of 2019 that saw all children age 12 and under not charged any fare for GO trains or buses.

Report back on MOU progress by June with a recommendation for council to consider approving the program. The recommendation would include timing options and funding, including the potential to begin the program in September 2020, identifying a one-time funding source from September to December and adding the annualized cost to the 2021 budget.

Purpose:

A City that Moves

- Increased Transportation Flows and Connectivity

A Healthy and Greener City

- Healthy Lifestyles
-

Background and Discussion:

On Sept. 23, 2019, Council approved the following staff direction:

“Direct the Mayor and Director of Transit to develop a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding free transit for Burlington students, outlining the program, costs, eligibility, and commitments in more detail, in partnership with Halton

Region and the four school boards that serve Halton students: Halton District School Board, Halton Catholic District School Board, and the two French school boards, Conseil scolaire Viamonde and Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir, and report back to council for a decision. “

This report provides an update on those discussions and next steps.

There are 4500 students living in Burlington who presently do not have access to yellow bus services and may be driven to school each day. Offering free transit to this demographic is a way to get more students riding the bus to school, work, after-school programs or recreation activities

We have already seen a positive response and ridership increase as a result of our free transit for seniors and low-income residents pilot launched earlier this year.

School boards already contribute funding towards the partial cost of student passes. The City of Burlington is asking them to maintain this funding to help offset the loss in revenue that would be seen as a result of this initiative.

Stakeholders from all four English and French public and Catholic school boards that operate in Burlington, along with Sue Connor from Burlington Transit have been engaged in MOU discussions throughout 2019.

The Halton District School Board has passed a resolution supporting, in principle, working towards an MOU regarding free student transit in Burlington. (Appendix A)

The French public (Appendix B) and Catholic (Appendix C) boards have submitted letters of support of this initiative to the City of Burlington.

The English Catholic board is currently working on their own resolution.

Financial Matters:

None as of this time. Future financial impacts will be considered during budget 2020 and 2021.

Total Financial Impact

N/A

Source of Funding

N/A

Other Resource Impacts

N/A

Conclusion:

Free transit for the students of Burlington will help reduce their dependence on cars, thereby reducing emissions and helping our environment, as well as increase overall ridership of our public transit system.

Respectfully submitted,
Mayor Marianne Meed Ward

Appendices:

- A. HDSB resolution
- B. French public school board resolution
- C. French Catholic school board resolution

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, Director of Finance and Director of Legal. Final approval is by the City Manager.