

1. 2025 Draft Operating and Capital Budgets – Transit Commission

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS AS AMENDED

That Council, sitting as Committee of the Whole, approve the Transit Commission 2025 Draft Operating and Capital Budgets as follows:

1. Transit Services as follows:
 - a. User fees (pages 8-9) as amended to:
 - i. Maintain the Free Transit for Seniors program on conventional buses and trains on Wednesdays to enhance affordability and promote transit usage among seniors; and
 - ii. Adjust the senior fare discount to 42% off the price of an adult monthly pass (at a cost of \$78.50 compared to \$135.00), effective January 1, 2025 to provide additional financial relief to seniors; and
 - iii. Direct staff to fund this budget pressure through an offsetting reduction of \$820,000 to the draft 2025 contribution to the Transit Capital reserve, budgeted at \$63.5 million; and
 - iv. Direct staff to enhance outreach and support to ensure eligible low-income seniors are aware of and can easily access the EquiPass program;
 - b. Operating Resource Requirement (pages 6-7);
2. Transit Commission Capital Budget (pages 10-11, individual projects listed on pages 20-51, including page 47 as amended);

3. That staff be directed to enter into negotiations and consultations with the four affected post-secondary institutions' administration and students, prior to the 2025 Fall Academic Term, to achieve the budgeted revenue targets as approved by Council on December 11, 2024; and
 - a. Report back to Transit Commission with results stemming from those negotiations and consultations by the end of Q2 2025; and
 - b. Be authorized to include any other post-secondary institutions in these negotiations, should those institutions be interested in joining the U-Pass program;
4. That Council Direct staff in collaboration with city elected officials, to explore and work in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and local school boards on the feasibility of the development of the equivalent to a U-Pass for students under 18 years of age; and
 - a. That, if such a pass is developed, staff, in collaboration with city elected officials, liaise with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Ontario Public Transit Association (OPTA) and any interested Ontario municipalities to explore opportunities to expand this;
5. That Transit Services staff be directed to bring a report to the Commission by Q2 2025, illustrating a plan to increase revenues associated with rentals, retail leases, advertising and sponsorships by 10% in 2025 and another 10% in 2026;
6. That Council consider Motion No. TTC 2024-16-04 in relation to seniors fares;
7. That Council consider Motion No. Motion No. TTC 2024-16-08 in relation to the UTA-RTA Boundary;
8. That Council consider Motion No. TTC 2024-16-10 in relation to youth fares.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF COUNCIL

The following motions were REFERRED to Council for consideration without recommendations:

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-04

Moved by: R. Brockington on behalf of Councillor J. Bradley

WHEREAS seniors represent a growing demographic in Ottawa who rely heavily on public transit for essential services, medical appointments, and social participation; and

WHEREAS the 2025 Draft Budget recommends a proposed increase to the Senior monthly pass of 120% or an additional \$59 per month bringing the Senior monthly pass from \$49 to \$108; and

WHEREAS the proposed increase to senior transit fares in the 2025 Draft Budget represents a significant financial burden for seniors, many who live on a fixed income; and

WHEREAS the City has already established a transit fare discount for eligible people on a low income; and

WHEREAS the EquiPass program, and it's established rates, has demonstrated success in improving transit accessibility for eligible residents; and

WHEREAS aligning senior fares with EquiPass rates would provide a more equitable and consistent approach to transit affordability; and

WHEREAS the EquiPass is currently funded through the Community and Social Services budget; and

WHEREAS allowing eligible seniors to apply for the EquiPass would transfer the financial pressure from the city's Transit Budget to the city's Community and Social Services Budget; and

WHEREAS seniors have also identified that the current EquiPass application process creates potential accessibility barriers for seniors seeking fare relief and they would like to maintain a simplified process to purchasing fare products;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Transit Commission recommend that City Council:

- 1. Maintain the Free Transit for Seniors program on conventional buses and trains on Wednesdays to enhance affordability and promote transit usage among seniors;**
- 2. Adjust the senior fare discount to align with the current rate for the monthly EquiPass of \$58.25 effective January 1, 2025 to provide additional financial relief to seniors;**
- 3. Direct staff to fund this budget pressure through an offsetting reduction of \$850,000 to the draft 2025 contribution to the Transit Capital reserve, budgeted at \$63.5 million, and \$440,000 through an increase to the Transit Levy of 0.11% or an incremental 94 cents per urban household.**

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-08

Moved by: W. Lo

WHEREAS the Transit Commission approved report ACS2020-TSD-TS-0006 on 18 November 2020, later approved by Council on 9 December 2020; and

WHEREAS the approved report recommended adjusting the boundary between the Urban Transit Area (UTA) and the Rural Transit Area (RTA) to match that of the urban boundary as defined in Schedule B of the Official Plan; and

WHEREAS By-law No. 2021-057 and By-law No. 2021-058 define the RTA and UTA respectively; and

WHEREAS the boundary change absorbed and reclassified large areas of the City from the RTA to the UTA; and

WHEREAS per the 2024 budget, the RTA-A levy is 0.055612 per cent while the UTA levy is 0.205539 per cent, representing a difference of almost 370 per cent; and

WHEREAS the only populated areas affected by the change were the communities of Hearts Desire, Rideau Glen, Winding Way, two streets near Prince

of Wales/Rideau Valley, and adjacent rural properties in wards 3 and 24 (map attached as Document 1, and on file with the City Clerk); and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT all properties on the streets listed below that were added to the Urban Transit Area (UTA) in 2021 be reclassified from UTA to Rural Transit Area-A (RTA-A) effective the 2025 property tax cycle:

- Barcham Crescent
- Bren-Maur Road – 2 to 79 (inclusive), and 126
- Colley Street
- Cortleigh Drive
- Eisenhower Crescent
- Goodwood Drive
- Hazelwood Way
- Heathwood Gate
- Holborn Avenue
- Howard Court
- Isbister Avenue
- Kelowna Street
- Maplehill Way
- Millcreek Court
- Mion Court
- Newland Drive
- Penderbrook Avenue
- Prince of Wales Drive – 2747 to 3806 (inclusive)
- Queen Anne Crescent
- Rideau Glen Drive
- Risborough Court
- Ryerson Avenue
- Tradewinds Drive
- Winding Way
- Woodroffe Avenue – 3486 to 3626 (even only, inclusive); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the reclassification from UTA to RTA-A be effective until transit availability for those communities matches the standard of the UTA, defined as an 800-metre walking distance to a bus stop during off-peak hours and 400 metres during peak hours; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the tax levy reduction be offset by a corresponding reduction from item 911725 – Transit 5-year Roadmap Comms/Marketing 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT staff work towards service improvements to other neighbourhoods built as part of the UTA but still do not have transit availability at UTA standards.

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-10

Moved by: R. Brockington on behalf of Councillor S. Devine

WHEREAS the Transit budget contains a \$120-million pressure; and

WHEREAS the City has proposed to use a series of financial “levers” to generate additional revenues to fill that gap, including an increase to the transit levy as well as reductions to fare discounts; and

WHEREAS the draft transit budget proposes an 8% increase to the transit levy, which will result in an increased levy of \$68 to the average assessed home of \$415,000; and

WHEREAS the total in additional revenues generated by reductions to fare discounts to monthly passes for youth aged 13 – 18 youth is \$5.6 million; and

WHEREAS these proposed increased fares would result in an increased cost of \$432 per year to youth who purchase 12 monthly passes; and

WHEREAS these increases to monthly pass fares for youth aged 13 – 18 may be a barrier to this group to using transit, and therefore is not a guaranteed additional revenue, and therefore poses increased risk not only to the 2025 financial outlook, but to Council’s goal of maintaining and increasing ridership; and

WHEREAS the City’s objective of seeking a more balanced approach between revenues from transit levy and revenues from ridership should seek to increase revenues from ridership by increasing the number of riders, not by increase the fare charged to each rider;

WHEREAS the additional increase in the transit levy required to generate the same \$5.6 million in revenues would be 1.41%, which would result in a further cost of \$11.99 per transit levy payer; and

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the transit levy be increased from 8% to 9.41%;
and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the discount fares for youth remain in place for 2025.

The committee also approved the following DIRECTION to staff:

Direction to staff (Councillor M. Carr):

That Transit Services staff review alternate ways to deliver Para Transpo coupons to make them more accessible to residents in all areas of the city.

Documentation

1. Extract of draft Minutes, Transit Commission, 25 November 2024
2. 2025 Draft Budget – Transit Commission (full, revised on November 13, 2024, and condensed) (ACS2024-FCS-FSP-0017)