

**EXTRACT OF DRAFT MINUTES 16
TRANSIT COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 25, 2024**

**EXTRAIT DE L'ÉBAUCHE DU
PROCÈS-VERBAL 16
COMMISSION DU TRANSPORT EN
COMMUN
LE 25 NOVEMBRE 2024**

Draft 2025 Operating and Capital Budgets – Transit Commission

File No. ACS2024-FCS-FSP-0017 – City Wide

The draft budget was tabled at the Council meeting of November 13, 2024. The Transit Commission's report on the draft budget will be considered by Council at its meeting of December 11, 2024.

Chair G. Gower provided opening remarks regarding the work done by the Long Range Financial Plan Transit Working Group.

Cyril Rogers, General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services, and Chief Financial Officer, and Renée Amilcar, General Manager, Transit Services, presented an overview of the report and answered questions from the Committee. A copy of the slide presentation is filed with the Office of the City Clerk.

Pat Scrimgeour, Director, Transit Customer Systems and Planning, and Bart Cormier, Director, Strategic Communications and External Relations, also answered questions from Commission.

Committee received the following submissions, and a copy of each is filed with the Office of the City Clerk:

- Sally Thomas email dated November 9
- Della Boudreau email dated November 15
- Alex Cullen letter dated November 15
- Paula Betuzzi email dated November 16
- Margaret Laing email dated November 17
- Michael Lee email dated November 17
- Catherine McKercher email dated November 18
- Juliet O'Neill email dated November 18
- Susan Murray email dated November 18
- Mary Carpenter email dated November 19
- Rosalie Reynolds letter dated November 19

- Peter Gould email dated November 19
- Laurent Gonzalez email dated November 20
- Jerry Fiori (Ottawa Disability Coalition) letter dated November 20
- Linda Butcher email dated November 20
- Dan Pershick email dated November 21
- John Burnside email dated November 22
- Ana Maria Cruz-Valderrama written comments received November 22
- John Verbaas (Federation of Citizens' Associations of Ottawa) email dated November 23
- Wayne Antle email dated November 24
- Grant Yusak speaking notes, and presentation slides, received November 24
- Joanne Lee email dated November 24
- Emma Bider written remarks received November 25
- Bonnie Schroeder (Council on Aging of Ottawa) email received November 25
- Noah Vineberg (ATU 279) written remarks received November 25
- Mireille Desmarais email received November 25
- Elaine Riddick email received November 25

The following members of the public spoke before the Committee and provided comments on the item:

- Ana Maria Cruz-Valderrama
- Alex Cullen
- Neil Saravanamuttoo – slides on file
- Sofia Chaudhry Schlichting
- Nick Grover (Free Transit Ottawa)
- Sarah Donnelly
- Robert McBryde
- Greg Richardson (Kanata Seniors Council)
- Raynald Marchand (Council on Aging of Ottawa)
- Matt Lortie
- Lisa MacLeod
- Lauren Seward-Munday
- Cassie Smith (EnviroCentre)
- Sam Hersh
- Ana Clara Miranda Guimaraes (Carleton University Students' Association)
- Sally Thomas
- Joan Kuyek

- Sharon Katz
- Elaine Riddick
- Kari Glynes Elliott (Ottawa Transit Riders)
- Andrew Gelling
- Janet Creery
- Alayne McGregor
- Alex Stratas (she/her) and Delphine Robitaille (University of Ottawa Students' Union)
- Stuart MacKay
- John Redins
- Kyle Humphrey
- Thomas André

Following discussions, the Committee considered the following directions and motions:

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.

Recommendation

That the Transit Commission consider the relevant portions of the 2025 Operating and Capital Budgets and make recommendations to Council, sitting as Committee of the Whole, to be held December 11, 2024.

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-01

Moved by C. Curry

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Transit Commission Budget Book (English full version) is amended at page 47 to replace the narrative text in account 911730 (Operations Support Vehicles – Growth 2025) with the following correct narrative text:

This project will fund the purchase of two growth vehicles for Stage 2 for operational requirements and two additional Supervisor vehicles for the expanded system. The project also includes vehicles for Public Works for maintenance and snow removal at Park and Ride lots on the expanded O-Train Line 2.

Carried

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-02

Moved by T. Tierney

Moved on behalf of the Long Range Financial Plan Transit Working Group:

WHEREAS the City of Ottawa is committed to fostering affordability, accessibility, and inclusivity for all residents, especially seniors who rely heavily on public transit;

WHEREAS all seniors in Ottawa in 2024 received a discount of 62% off the price of a regular adult monthly pass, which is significantly above the average discount offered by comparable municipalities across Canada, and is a larger discount than the EquiPass offered to economically disadvantaged residents; and

WHEREAS all seniors in Ottawa, regardless of their income, currently pay less than low-income residents on the EquiPass and ride for free on Wednesdays and Sundays; and

WHEREAS the draft 2025 City budget included an increase in fares and the removal of free seniors days on Wednesdays and Sundays; and

WHEREAS free transit on Wednesdays for seniors was a valued program that encouraged transit usage among this demographic, contributing to community participation, reducing isolation, and supporting seniors with limited incomes;

WHEREAS maintaining free transit days on Wednesdays and adjusting the senior discount to 42% off the price of an adult monthly pass would align Ottawa more closely with similar cities and reflect the City's commitment to equitable transit access, with seniors paying \$78.50 compared to the regular adult fare of \$135.00;

WHEREAS low-income seniors in Ottawa will continue to be eligible for the EquiPass, which offers a reduced monthly pass at \$58.25 and a single-ride fare of \$1.75, providing significant savings for those who qualify;

WHEREAS the 2025 budget reflects significant investments in transit, and affordability for seniors can be accommodated within the City's broader efforts to address economic challenges while investing in critical services;

WHEREAS the estimated annual cost of reinstating free transit for seniors on Wednesdays is approximately \$290,000, and increasing the senior fare discount to 42% is projected to cost an additional \$530,000 annually;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT 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 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;**
3. **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;**
4. **Direct staff to enhance outreach and support to ensure eligible low-income seniors are aware of and can easily access the EquiPass program.**

For (8): G. Gower, C. Curry, R. Brockington, M. Carr, D. Hill, J. Leiper, W. Lo, and T. Tierney

Against (1): S. Menard

Carried (8 to 1)

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-03

Moved by S. Menard

WHEREAS the U-Pass agreements between the city and four post-secondary institutions —Algonquin College, Carleton University, St. Paul University and the University of Ottawa—have proven successful for more than a decade, providing students with a means of navigating our city and OC Transpo with a steady and sizable revenue stream; and

WHEREAS in recent years, revenue from the U-Pass has accounted for 19% to 27% of OC Transpo revenues, annually; and

WHEREAS encouraging transit use provides financial and environmental benefits to the city; and

WHEREAS Ottawa's U-Pass price is among the highest—if not the absolute highest—U-Pass price in Canada; and

WHEREAS the city has an agreement with each of the four institutions to limit annual price increases to 2.5%; and

WHEREAS any increase beyond 2.5% would require agreement between the city and each of the schools; and

WHEREAS maintaining the integrity of the U-Pass program is vital for OC Transpo and the city's transportation system; and

WHEREAS school tuition and budgets for the 2025 Winter Term are already set and consultation did not occur on the proposed changes to long-standing U-Pass agreements;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT Transit Commission recommend that Council approve that:

- 1. 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;**
- 2. Staff report back to Transit Commission with results stemming from those negotiations and consultations by the end of Q2 2025; and**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT staff be authorized to include any other post-secondary institutions in these negotiations, should those institutions be interested in joining the U-Pass program.

Carried

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-04

Moved by R. Brockington

Moved 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.**

Amendment:

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-05

Moved by C. Curry

BE IT RESOLVED that the Councillor Brockington Motion (on behalf of Councillor Bradley) re: seniors fares be referred to Council for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

Carried

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-06

Moved by S. Menard

WHEREAS for more than a decade, the city has had an agreement with post-secondary institutions in the city to implement a U-Pass program for college and university students in Ottawa; and

WHEREAS until this year, children 12 and under could ride OC Transpo for free; and

WHEREAS this year, OC Transpo will be implementing a new fare class for children 11 or 12 years of age, eliminating free transit for this age group; and

WHEREAS establishing a u-pass for under 18 students would assist them attending school, extracurricular activities, personal engagements and work; and

WHEREAS it is to the benefit of the city to establish new generations comfortable with transit ridership and the potential for life long transit users ; and

WHEREAS some economies of scale exist and duplication of transportation that could bring new affordable benefits to residents of Ottawa and the Province; and

WHEREAS it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and local school boards to provide and pay for transportation for students who require busing to attend school; and

WHEREAS extending a U-Pass for under 18 students—without receiving appropriate funding from the Ministry of Education and/or local school boards—would create a budget pressure for OC Transpo;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Transit Commission recommend 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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED 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 endeavour province-wide.

Carried

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-07

Moved by R. Brockington

WHEREAS during the 2018-2022 Transit Commission, the Commission directed the General Manager to increase advertising revenues, particularly via ad space on public transit vehicles and in public transit stations;

WHEREAS all-types of advertising opportunities remain grossly underutilized in stations, in public transit vehicles, on the exterior of public transit vehicles and in bus shelters;

WHEREAS direction has previously been given to OC Transpo management to increase the number of free transit days sponsored by corporate, community partner or other interested parties;

WHEREAS opportunities remain to increase rental and lease opportunities as well;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED 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.

Carried

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.

Amendment:

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-09

Moved by C. Curry

BE IT RESOLVED that the Councillor Lo Motion re: UTA-RTA Boundary be referred to Council for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

Carried

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-10

Moved by R. Brockington

Moved 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.

Amendment:

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-11

Moved by C. Curry

BE IT RESOLVED that the Brockington Motion (on behalf of Councillor Devine) re: youth fares be referred to Council for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

Carried

Motion No. TTC 2024-16-12

Moved by C. Curry

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Transit Commission recommend 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);**
 - b. **Operating Resource Requirement (page 6-7);**
2. **Transit Commission Capital Budget (page 10-11, individual projects listed on pages 20-51, including page 47 as amended).**

For (6): G. Gower, C. Curry, M. Carr, D. Hill, J. Leiper, and T. Tierney

Against (3): R. Brockington, W. Lo, and S. Menard

Carried as amended (6 to 3)