



TO: GENERAL COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: BARRIE TRANSIT FIELD TRIP PASS

WARD: ALL

PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT: T. GREEN, SUPERVISOR OF COMPLIANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE, EXT. 4179

SUBMITTED BY: B. FORSYTH, DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT AND PARKING STRATEGY

GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: R. JAMES-REID, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ACCESS BARRIE

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That the Barrie Transit Field Trip Pass Pilot Program be continued to provide eligible elementary schools access to Field Trip Passes from September through June of each year.
2. That Barrie Transit begin a one year Field Trip Pass Pilot Program involving two local high schools to study the viability and benefits of expanding the Program to eligible high schools to run from September, 2019 to June, 2020.

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

3. During the 2018/19 school year, Barrie Transit piloted the Barrie Transit Field Trip Pass program. The pilot program was an initiative to explore new ways of integrating services to better serve our younger rider demographic, while at the same time increasing travel training and community partner opportunities.
4. The initial pilot program was a partnership between Barrie Transit and the Simcoe County Student Transit Consortium (representing both the Simcoe County District School Board and the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board). It involved ten (10) elementary schools and took place between December 2018 and June 2019.
5. Survey data was collected by participating schools at the beginning and end of the 2018/19 pilot term. This information, in addition to collected fare data, ridership statistics and tracking figures provided the basis for review when considering whether to transition from a pilot to permanent program.
6. The participating school boards, through their transit consortia, have committed additional resources to this program, if formalized by the City. These additional resources will result in greater outreach, travel training and promotional opportunities. This is a value-driven opportunity for Barrie Transit to leverage a partnership opportunity to significantly increase awareness, integration and participation.
7. While the focus of the program is the provision of barrier free transit to students and schools, it is anticipated that its reach will extend far beyond its initial scope and intention. Barrie Transit has approached various City departments, facilities and service partners regarding partnership or

promotional opportunities. During the 2018/19 pilot, Barrie Transit worked with the Barrie Public Library, to promote the use of transit services to target schools as part of the Summer Reading Program - Library Visits.

ANALYSIS

8. To ensure Barrie Transit explores meaningful ridership growth opportunities, staff have reviewed and analyzed ridership data and identify gaps. Using available information presents the opportunity to create plans of action as the department works towards meeting Council's Strategic Priorities and city/departmental goals.
9. The partnership between Barrie Transit and the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC) also provides the opportunity to leverage the Consortia's extensive knowledge and expertise in matters relating to individual school's transit needs, as well as scheduling and promotional support.
10. Program results and data during the pilot period were very encouraging, with overwhelmingly positive feedback received by participating schools and significant interest shown by non-participating schools. Seventy percent of participants indicated having access to the Field Trip Pass increased their usage of Barrie Transit and eighty percent of participants indicated the Field Trip Pass helped reduce transportation barriers for their schools.

Key Program Details – Elementary Schools

11. Field Trip Passes will be made available to all elementary schools from participating school boards, located within City boundaries. This could include up to 41 participating schools.
12. Participating schools will be provided with three (3) field trip passes, which will be valid for unlimited travel for up to thirty (30) students and five (5) adults. Multiple passes can be combined to accommodate additional students/teachers/chaperones.
13. The passes will complement the upcoming Barrie Transit Fare Changes – Free Transit for Children 0-12, which comes into effect November 1st, 2019.

Key Program Details – Secondary School Pilot

14. To capitalize on the success of the pilot at the elementary level, Barrie Transit will work with our school board partners to explore the viability of the program at the secondary school level.
15. The secondary school student population is also a group which would benefit from added exposure to transit services and travel training opportunities. Complementing existing programs such as Licence2Ride, the Secondary School Pilot will provide the opportunity to measure current state and identify key areas requiring attention to better service this growing ridership demographic.
16. Pilot schools were determined after a review of numerous factors including current stop infrastructure, routing, accessibility, access to City facilities, route capacity and other safety considerations. Following discussions with SCSTC, Barrie North Collegiate (SCDSB) and St. Peter's Catholic Secondary School (SMCDSB) were selected as the pilot participating schools.
17. Participating schools will be provided with three (3) field trip passes, which will be valid for unlimited travel for up to thirty (30) students and five (5) adults. Multiple passes can be combined to accommodate additional students/teachers/chaperones.

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18. Survey data will be collected from participating schools at the beginning and end of the secondary school pilot term. This information, in addition to collected fare data, ridership statistics and tracking figures will provide the basis for review when considering whether to transition from a pilot to permanent program.
 19. Service Barrie will continue to assist with trip planning, general questions and communication needs, as they pertain to this program. Additional trip planning tools will be available via the Barrie Transit website – MyRideBarrie.ca.
 20. The Secondary School pilot will run from September 2019 through June 2020, capturing the 2019/20 school year. Upon completion of the pilot term, City staff will report back to Council with future recommendations.
 21. City staff are confident this new program will continue to promote transit as a viable transportation option for school boards for field trips, school programming, sports team travel and other. Barrier-free transit at both the elementary and secondary school levels will create new riders and City staff believe the investment in ridership growth opportunities will serve to protect and enhance revenue streams. In addition, the increased ridership will likely result in increased provincial and federal funding based on existing funding models.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

22. There are no environmental matters related to the recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES

23. The following alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1 General Committee could choose not to formalize the Field Trip Pass program.

This alternative is not recommended as it would prevent the City from expanding the program to all elementary schools and limit Transit's ability to take advantage of the investments currently being made in field trip and charter services by the Simcoe County Student Transit Consortium.

FINANCIAL

24. The City will benefit from the increase in transit ridership resulting from the Field Trip Pass through additional federal and provincial funding such as the Provincial Gas Tax (PGT) which is awarded based on total transit ridership.
25. The purpose of this program is to promote transit to school aged children and youth, who given their travel patterns are largely need-based riders to a greater degree than others. By engaging these youth it is hoped that as they mature they'll be come choose transit as their mode of transportation, increasing ridership and revenue, and thus providing a healthier transit system.

LINKAGE TO 2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN

26. The recommendation(s) included in this Staff Report support the following goals identified in the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan:
- Offering Innovation and Citizen Driven Services
 - Building Strong Neighbourhoods
 - Improving the Ability to Get Around Barrie
27. The implementation of the Barrie Transit Field Trip Pass program for participating schools will provide significant benefits for students, the participating school boards, the transit system and the community as a whole. The proposed program will increase ridership, increase travel training opportunities, introduce transit services to a young demographic of future riders and assist in developing future partnership opportunities with participating parties. The proposed program will increase ridership and provide a more educated ridership, which will benefit all users of the transit system.