



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 14-213**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Denis Leger, Commissioner of Transportation, Facilities & Emergency Services
Resource Staff: Sheila Kidd, Director of Transportation Services
Date of Meeting: June 17, 2014
Subject: Kingston Transit – Grade 9 & 10 Transit Pass Extended Pilot Program

Executive Summary:

In June 2012, Council approved a pilot program to provide complimentary access to Kingston Transit for all Grade 9 students attending secondary schools within the City of Kingston, for the period of September 2012 – August 2013.

Council requested that staff report back prior to the end of the pilot period with a recommendation on options for continuing the program beyond August 2013. Report 13-260 provided results of the Grade 9 program pilot program for the 2012/2013 academic year and recommendations for the 2013/2014 school year.

Report 13-260 recommended the continuation of the Grade 9 pilot program with the expansion of the pilot program to include Grade 10 students, in partnership with the Limestone District School Board and Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board. The Boards provided a total combined financial contribution of \$30,000 to cover costs associated with the Grade 10 program expansion.

This report recommends the continuation of the Grade 9-10 pilot program for the 2014-2015 school year, subject to an agreement with the Limestone District School Board and Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board to provide a total combined financial contribution of \$30,000 to cover the costs associated with the Grade 10 expansion.

This report is time-sensitive to ensure adequate time to plan and promote the recommended program for the upcoming 2014/2015 academic year.

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Recommendation:

That the pilot program, to provide for complimentary transit passes for Grade 9 students attending secondary schools within the City of Kingston, be extended for the period of September 1, 2014 – August 31, 2015; and

That the pilot program provide complimentary transit passes for Grade 10 students attending secondary schools within the City of Kingston, under the same terms and conditions, subject to the City of Kingston receiving a total combined financial contribution of \$30,000 from the Limestone District School Board and Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board; and

That staff continue to explore other partnership opportunities of mutual benefit related to transportation with the School Boards, and report back to Council no later than June 2015 on the results and impact of the Grade 9 and Grade 10 complimentary transit pass program and recommendations for the 2015 – 2016 school year.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Denis Leger, Commissioner of
Transportation, Facilities and
Emergency Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Gerard Hunt, Chief Administrative Officer

Consultation with the following Commissioners:

Cynthia Beach, Corporate & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Lanie Hurdle, Community Services	Not required
Jim Keech, President and CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required

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Options/Discussion:

In June 2012, Council approved a pilot program to provide complimentary access to Kingston Transit for all Grade 9 students attending secondary schools within the City of Kingston, for the period of September 2012 – August 2013. The objective of the pilot program was to expose Grade 9 students to the Kingston Transit system and create the potential for these students to continue as regular, committed transit passengers when their pass expired.

Council requested that staff report back prior to the end of the pilot period with a recommendation on options for continuing the program beyond August 2013. In July 2013, staff recommended the continuation of the Grade 9 pilot program with the expansion of the pilot program to include Grade 10 students, in partnership with the Limestone District School Board and Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Boards (Report 13-260). The Boards provided a total combined financial contribution of \$30,000 to cover costs associated with the program expansion.

This report provides a summary of the Grade 9 and 10 program pilot and recommendations for the upcoming school year.

Results

To simplify the reporting, results for each academic year will be reported as the year in which the school year started. Specifically the academic year 2012/2013 will be reported as 2012 and the year 2013/2014 will be reported as 2013. Results for all years represent the 8-month period September through April inclusive.

Grade 9-10 Passes Issued

Kingston Transit's Youth fare category is available to riders between the ages of 6 and 18 inclusive. This category provides reduced rates for cash, multi-ride cards, and monthly passes. In 2011 (the year before the pilot was initiated), Youth monthly pass sales totalled 2,571 passes. This number dropped to 2,171 in 2012 and recovered slightly to 2,206 in 2013.

In addition to the Youth pass sales, in Year 1 of the pilot (2012), 638 Grade 9 transit passes were issued. In the second year (2013), 869 Grade 9 and 630 Grade 10 transit passes were issued for a total of 1,499 Grade 9-10 passes issued as part of the pilot program.

Combined Youth passes from the Grade 9 and 10 pilot, plus the other monthly Youth pass sales, represents a total of 3,705 passes for the 2013 period. This represents a 52% increase (over 2011) in the Youth fare category since the pilot program was introduced.

The increased participation rate for the second year of the pilot program for Grade 9 students is attributed to the fact that staff promoted the program and issued Grade 9 passes at the schools. On the other hand, Grade 10 students were required to visit City Hall or the Cataraqui Centre to renew/obtain their pass.

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Ridership

In 2012, the ridership for the Grade 9 students accounted for slightly more than 23,000 trips. This increased to 63,606 trips (an increase of 176%) in the second year (2013) when Grade 10 students were included in the program. Unfortunately, there is no way to determine how these trips were attributed to each grade.

In comparison, for the same 8-month period, there were 60,285 trips in 2012 and 58,280 trips in 2013 taken by monthly Youth riders who were not part of the pilot program. The average number of trips taken by Grade 9 and 10 students in 2013 represents 42.44 trips per student (63,606 trips divided by 1,499 passes) compared to 26.42 average trips for monthly Youth pass holders (58,280 trips divided by 2,206 pass holders) not included in the program. This indicates that the Grade 9 and 10 students use the system significantly more than other monthly Youth pass holders.

Ridership patterns for the Grade 9 and 10 students indicate that the majority of usage is related to traveling to/from school. Usage patterns show that Grade 9 ridership in Year 1(2012) of the program was concentrated around the start and end times of school days, with approximately 65% of all trips occurring on weekdays between 7:00am–9:00am and 2:00pm–4:00pm. The remaining 35% of trips were spread across evenings and weekends with no distinguishable pattern of usage.

In Year 2 (2013) of the program, with the pilot expanded to include Grade 10 students, ridership patterns remained relatively unchanged at 61% during the 7:00am–9:00am and 2:00pm–4:00pm period. In 2013, the number of total trips year over year increased by 158% during these travel times.

This is a strong indication that the program is successful in encouraging Grade 9 and 10 students to use the public transit system. While these results are encouraging in terms of the program objectives, it does raise concerns related to system capacity, as the students are travelling primarily during the morning and afternoon peak periods when some of the routes are already at or beyond capacity.

Youth Fare Product Sales

The fare box revenue for Youth passes for the 2012 fiscal year represented approximately \$298,000 (\$159,000 from multi-ride passes and \$139,000 from monthly passes). In 2013, revenue was approximately \$276,000 (\$161,000 multi-ride and \$116,000 monthly). This is in addition to Youth cash fares that are collected but cannot be quantified. The year-to-year variance was offset by the \$30,000 contribution from the School Boards.

Upcoming Academic Year 2014 – 2015

Given the success of the Grade 9-10 program, staff is recommending that the pilot program be extended for another year. Continuing the pilot program for Grades 9 and 10 will enable staff to analyse whether the program's objective has been successful in attracting new committed

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paying transit riders from among the Grade 11 students who participated and benefited from two years of free transit use previously.

Staff has met with representatives of the two School Boards and reviewed the program results. Both the Limestone District School Board and Algonquin District School Board have indicated an interest in extending the program to the upcoming academic year, and to continuing to provide financial support, subject to final confirmation. The support from the Boards would continue to be \$30,000 for the upcoming school year.

Staff will continue to explore other partnership opportunities of mutual benefit related to transportation with the School Boards and report back to Council as necessary.

Existing Policy/By Law:

N/A

Notice Provisions:

N/A

Accessibility Considerations:

N/A

Financial Considerations:

The revenue reduction associated with the Grade 9 complimentary transit pass program was incorporated in the 2012 operating budget and was subsequently reflected in both 2013 and 2014 budgets. Similar to the 2013 pilot program, the extension for an additional year to include grade 10 students will be offset by a \$30,000 contribution from the School Boards.

Contacts:

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

NA

Exhibits Attached:

N/A