

Date: 2024-01-15

Subject: **Explore Brampton - Youth Pass Pilot Program**

Contact: Anand Patel, Director, Recreation
Ivana Tomas, Director, Transit Services

Report Number: Brampton Transit-2024-063

Recommendations:

1. That the joint report from Anand Patel, Director, Recreation and Ivana Tomas, Director, Transit Services, Transit to the Committee of Council Meeting of January 31, 2024, re: Explore Brampton Youth Pass (EBYP) Pilot Program be received; and
2. That Council approves staff recommendations to establish the Explore Brampton Youth Pass Program (2,500 passes) for youth ages 12-16 to have free access to Brampton Transit and Recreation programs, during summer months, on a permanent basis.
3. That Council enact the by-law attached as Appendix D here to amend [Schedule G](#) (Transit Division User Fees & Charges) of the User Fee By-law 380-2003 continuing a free Explore Brampton Youth Pass, annually from Canada Day to Labour Day inclusive.

Overview:

- **Brampton is one of the youngest cities in Canada with more than 130,000 youth within the ages of 14 and 29. Many youth travel using public transit, especially those attending high school and post-secondary institutions.**
- **On March 30, 2022, Transit and Recreation staff submitted a Council Report with recommendations that Council approve the implementation of a pilot program of 1,000 Explore Brampton Youth Passes, where youth ages 12-16 have free access to Brampton Transit and Recreation drop-in programs, including swim, skate, and select sports from July 1 –**

September 5, 2022. At this meeting, Council approved up to 2,000 passes for the program.

- On December 12, 2022, Transit and Recreation staff submitted a Council Report with a summary of the summer 2022 data from the Explore Brampton Youth Pass Pilot Program. Staff recommended to continue this program as a pilot for summer 2023 to further assess the program and its impact. It also aligns with the City's strategy to engage youth in healthy and safe spaces within Council strategic priorities.**
- On February 22, 2023, at the Committee of Council meeting, Transit and Recreation were approved to continue the Explore Brampton Youth Pass Program for summer 2023 as a pilot program where youth ages 12-16 have free access to Brampton Transit and Recreation programs.**
- Recreation and Transit are proposing, for Council approval, the permanent establishment of the Explore Brampton Youth Pass Program (2,500 passes) for youth ages 12-16 to have free access to Brampton Transit and Recreation programs during the summer months.**
- In 2024, the City could see a cost impact of less than approximately \$75K (\$50K in Transit & \$25K in Recreation revenues) related to the Explore Brampton Youth Pass pilot program. This financial impact would be absorbed within the departments 2024 Operating budgets.**

Background:

Brampton is one of the youngest cities in Canada with more than 130,000 youth within the ages of 14 and 29. Many youth travel using public transit, especially those attending high school and post-secondary institutions. The 2016 City of Brampton Youth Engagement Survey report (Appendix A) identified that 45% of youth (15-29) travel via public transit, including trains and buses. It also highlights that youth desire more events, but also more day-to-day activities, with lack of activities and boredom mentioned a significant number of times when asked what youth are least proud of in Brampton.

The City of Brampton has a strong, interdependent relationship with the City's youth. In 2019, youth (ages 13 to 19), accounted for approximately 17% of Brampton Transit ridership or 5.5 million annual rides. Over the past decade, pre-COVID, the percentage of youth rides on Brampton Transit services increased dramatically (by over 300%).

In the summer of 2019, Recreation sold approximately 23,000 drop-in tickets to youth ages 10 to 17, which included skating, swimming, shinny, fitness day passes, and

sports. Approximately 76% of these drop-ins were sold to child/youth (ages 10-13), whereas only ~24% were sold to teens (ages 14-17), indicating a significant drop in attendance of youth engaging with local recreation centres as they reach teen years.

With Council approvals in place, the program officially launched to the community on May 19, 2022. Recreation and Transit worked diligently with Strategic Communications and leveraged current relationships with Brampton's youth agencies, community agencies and the school boards (Peel District School Board and Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board) to share this program with their youth clientele and students. The strategy proved effective as most of the referrals to the EBYP pilot program came from Brampton's community agencies and schools.

Another year of this pilot program was approved by Committee of Council for summer 2023 on February 22, 2023, where youth ages 12-16 years had free access to Brampton Transit and Recreation selected drop-in programs from July 1 – September 4, 2023.

The program officially launched to the community on March 27, 2023, and online applications were accepted until May 7, 2023.

Current Situation:

Recreation and Transit staff have consolidated data from the 2023 pilot and statistics are as follows:

Key Highlights:

- 1,848 unique applications were received (an increase of 17% from summer 2022)
- 1,680 were approved and processed (an increase of 30% from summer 2022)
- Approximately 880 applications were classified as vulnerable based on the selection criteria of being referred by community leaders, agencies and schools and also living in a neighbourhood with a low index score based on Region of Peel's Neighbourhood Information Tool (this is an increase of 20% from summer 2022)

Recreation Highlights:

- Recreation Centres had a total of 2,091 youth visits during July 1 – September 4, 2023 (this is an increase of 55% from Summer 2022)
- Top three popular attended drop-in programs were:
 - Drop-In Fitness Floor (1279 visits)
 - Drop-In Swimming (668 visits)
 - Drop-In Basketball (86 visits).
- The top three (3) centres with the most visits were:
 - Cassie Campbell Community Centre (748 visits)

- Gore Meadows Community Centre (513 visits)
- Chinguacousy Wellness Centre (231 visits)

Transit Highlights:

- A total of 7,671 trips were logged from youth with the EBYP pass which results in an average of youth with the EBYP using transit 4.6 times during the duration of the program from July 1 – September 4, 2023.
- Trips per week by youth
 - 32% of youth took 1-3 trips (an increase of 5% from summer 2022)
 - 28% of youth took 3-5 trips (an increase of 6% from summer 2022)
 - 20% of youth took 6-10 trips (an increase of 1% from summer 2022)
 - 12% of youth took 10+ trips (a decrease of 7% from summer 2022)
 - 8% of youth took 0 trips (a decrease of 5% from summer 2022)

Communications:

A communications, marketing and outreach campaign was implemented that focused on social media, digital displays at transit terminals, recreation centres and ongoing outreach by the Recreation Community Development Team with school boards and community agencies to promote the EBYP Program.

As part of the application process, youth were asked how they learned about the EBYP program and the results indicated that social media was the primary channel of engaging youth, with schools at the top of the list as well. Specific results below:

- Social Media = 27%
- Schools = 24%
- Friends = 18%
- Youth Community Agencies/Groups/Organizations = 16%
- Family = 15%

Recommendations:

Staff from both the Transit and Recreation Divisions recommend that Council approve to continue the Explore Brampton Youth Pass Program moving forward where youth ages 12 to 16 have free access to Brampton Transit and Recreation selected drop-in programs during the summer months of July and August, up until and including Labour Day. Staff will continue to improve and streamline the application process to ensure access is easier for residents and managed efficiently from an operational perspective.

The current program has 2,000 passes approved and as Transit and Recreation continue to grow and expand the program, the recommendation is to increase the number of passes to 2,500. When and if there is a need to increase the number of passes, Transit and Recreation will bring this back to Council for consideration as per the annual budget process.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

The total estimated impact to the City for Transit and Recreation combined is less than approximately \$75,000 and will be absorbed in the 2024 operating budget.

Strategic Focus Area:

This report supports Council's strategic focus areas, with our community as the inspiration and heart of the program. Brampton Transit and Recreation are partnering to support our diverse community of youth to connect them to safe and healthy programs.

Culture & Diversity, focusing on cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding by engaging, communicating and supporting diverse groups across the city. Youth throughout the city will have a barrier free opportunity to engage with new services and programs.

Health & Well-being, focused on improving citizens' belonging, health and wellness and encouraging active and healthy lifestyles. The programs and services that are accessible to youth through this program offer a safe and healthy environment for them to learn, grow and succeed.

Transit & Connectivity, focusing on transportation and a connected infrastructure that is safe and convenient. By improving transit and active transportation opportunities, the programs offer youth a chance to experience transit and become a life-long user.

Other Strategic Alignments:

The Explore Brampton Youth Pass also aligns with the goals of the [Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy's](#) (Appendix B) Priority Area #3 Well-being and Social Inclusion. With the introduction of this summer pass, youth will have the opportunity to explore Brampton in an integrated way through the use of free recreation programs while becoming comfortable with transit routes across Brampton.

The Explore Brampton Youth Pass also aligns with the Peel's Community Safety and Well-being Plan (Appendix C) The Region of Peel Community Safety and Well-being Plan (CSWB 2020-2024) examined the needs of youth and families across Peel in three focused areas such as family violence, mental health and addictions, and systemic

discrimination. Youth and families expressed their need to be involved in decision-making and have their voices heard. The CSWB plan drives collective action toward creating a community where everyone feels a sense of belonging, is safe, has access to programs, services and supports, and where their basic needs are met.

Conclusion:

The main goals of the Explore Brampton Youth Pass is to:

- Engage youth early in recreation centres that support lifelong healthy habits.
- Attract more youth to ride transit to increase the overall modal split for transit in the city.
- Provide youth the opportunities to feel safe and comfortable travelling on public transit and explore seeing various locations in Brampton.
- Increase access to recreation centres by eliminating transportation and program costs.
- Foster positive and collaborative relationships with youth groups, community agencies and schools to ensure a collaborative approach to supporting Brampton’s youth.

The pilot program achieved the above set goals and has set the foundation to further engage youth in Brampton through the use of local transit and the use of recreation programs. This report has been prepared to provide Council with a summary of the stats and data from the proposed Explore Brampton Youth Pass pilot program in 2023 and to request approval to continue the Explore Brampton Youth Pass moving forward. The program will continue to raise awareness of what is available to youth through Brampton Recreation and get them comfortable using public transit.

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Appendix A – 2016 Youth Engagement Survey

Appendix B – Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy 2018-2028

Appendix C – Peel’s Community Safety Well-Being Plan 2020-2024

Appendix D – Draft User Fee By-Law 380-2003 Amendment