

Date: 2022-03-30

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

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Report Number: Brampton Transit-2022-373

Recommendations:

1. **THAT** the joint report from Ivana Tomas, Director, Transit Services, Transit, and Rob Gasper, Acting Director, Recreation dated March 30, 2022 to Brampton Committee of Council Meeting of April 13, 2022, re: **Explore Brampton Youth Pass Pilot Program** (Report Number: Brampton Transit-2022-373,) be received; and
2. **THAT** Council approve the implementation of a pilot program of 1,000 Explore Brampton Youth Passes, where youth ages 12-15 have free access to Brampton Transit and Recreation drop-in programs, including swim, skate, and select sports from July 1st – September 5th, 2022.
3. **THAT** Council enact the by-law attached as Appendix E hereto to amend Schedule G (Transit Division User Fees & Charges) of the User Fee By-law 380-2003 establishing a free Explore Brampton Youth Pass, effective July 1, 2022 to September 5, 2022.

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.
- At the June 19, 2019 Council meeting a discussion surrounding youth engagement, youth initiatives and specifically MiWay's (Mississauga Transit) 'Youth Freedom Pass' occurred. Transit staff were requested to report back on options for implementing a Youth Transit Strategy.

- At the October 2, 2019 Committee of Council, Transit presented a report which provided additional details on the MiWay Freedom Pass program and a motion was carried that Transit staff continue to work closely with the City's Strategic Development team and participate in the creation of a corporate youth strategy where existing and additional transit specific programs and incentives may be linked with other corporate youth incentives (RM 79/2019 - See Appendix B).
- Over the last few years, youth have been vocal about their needs through multiple channels including The Youth Hub Consultation (Appendix C) and the Youthful Cities Youth Engagement Survey (Appendix A).
- Over the last couple years due to COVID-19 pandemic, Brampton Transit has experienced a significant loss of ridership. As we begin to recover, the Explore Brampton Youth Pass can be used as a tool to increase ridership, and gain new transit users that will expand future modal split.
- Recreation and Transit are proposing, for Council approval, the implementation of a pilot program of 1,000 Explore Brampton Youth Passes, where youth aged 12-15 have free access to Brampton Transit and Recreation drop-in programs, including swim, skate, and sports from July 1st – September 5th, 2022.
- In 2022, the City could see a potential revenue loss of approximately \$70K (\$60K in Transit & 10K in Recreation revenues) related to the Explore Brampton Youth Pass pilot program. It is anticipated that this financial impact would be absorbed within the departments 2022 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.

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At the October 2, 2019 Committee of Council, Transit presented a report which provided additional details on the MiWay Freedom Pass program and a motion was carried that Transit staff continue to work closely with the City's Strategic Development team and participate in the creation of a corporate youth strategy where existing and additional transit specific programs and incentives may be linked with other corporate youth incentives (RM 79/2019 - See Appendix B)

On June 19, 2019, the report titled Proposed Options to Convert City Owned Assets to a Community Youth Hub (RM 69/2019) was presented by Recreation. Two youth hubs at Century Gardens and Susan Fennell Sportsplex were approved as part of the City's [Parks and Recreation Master Plan](#). The estimated costs to develop Brampton's youth hubs is 15.41M which will be funded by the City of Brampton's 2020-2022 capital budget, Region of Peel 2020 capital budget along with federal and provincial grants. The development of youth hubs supports Recreation goals to create engaging youth programs and spaces in order to keep residents aged 12-29 connected to City programming and local community centres.

At the beginning of 2020, Recreation and Transit staff began collaborating on details for the implementation of a Brampton Summer Youth pass similar to MiWay's Freedom Pass. These efforts were put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which began shortly after initial discussions occurred. With the pandemic restrictions now easing, staff restarted planning at the end of 2021.

Current Situation:

Over the last few years, youth have been vocal about their needs through multiple channels including The Youth Hub Consultation (Appendix C) and the Youthful Cities Youth Engagement Survey (Appendix A).

Some of the items youth have expressed are:

- Youth identified 'recreation programs' as one of the top three priorities for programs they would like access to at the Community Youth Hubs (Youth Hub Consultation Summary Report p. 8).
- Barriers to participating in youth programs is lack of awareness predominantly, but also includes program costs, distance, and program timing. (Youth Hub Consultation Summary Report p. 19).

- Youth identified barrier to participation to also include infrequent transit service that is too expensive and does not efficiently travel to places youth want to (Youth Hub Consultation Summary Report p. 21).

It is recommended that the qualifying age begins at 12 years, as the City of Brampton recognizes this as the start of the youth age bracket. It is also recommended that the pass is inclusive of 15 year olds, as they are entering Grade 10 in September and thus will often begin their first job during the summer months prior.

From a transit perspective, 12 – 15 years of age targets youth early and at a stage where significant life events and habits occur. Youth at this age are close to completing elementary school (12-13 years old), some entering high school (13 – 14 years old) and those already in post-secondary (14-15 years old), where by taking transit can become a way of life.

Proposed Explore Brampton Youth Pass pilot program:

To address the barriers and concerns heard directly from the youth of Brampton, an integrated free summer Transit and Recreation pass is proposed to raise awareness of what is available to youth through Brampton Recreation and get comfortable using public transit.

Additional benchmarking of similar free programs offered in various jurisdictions and municipalities (i.e., City of Barrie) were explored and led to the local Bramptonized vision proposed. With the goal of promoting health and wellness in youth, while providing accessible transportation, the City of Brampton proposes the Explore Brampton Youth Pass Pilot Program with the following key criteria:

Program Overview:

- Provide, free of charge, up to 1000 passes to eligible youth residing in Brampton between the ages of 12-15.
- To minimize the risk of misuse, staff are exploring to have passes include picture of youth.
- Pass active for the period of July 1, 2022 to September 5, 2022.
- Provides the pass holder with free access to ride transit.
- Provides the pass holder access to attend the following Recreation drop-in programs free of cost: Badminton, Basketball, Hockey Shoot Around, Pickleball, Shinny, Skate, Soccer, Swim, Lane Swim, Table Tennis, Volleyball and Fitness Centre Access (during non-peak times – 11am-3pm for 14 and 15 year olds).

Program Administration:

- A streamlined online application process that captures identification and proof of residency.
- Explore Brampton Youth Pass available for the first 1,000 eligible applicants, with a waiting list to be utilized if limit is reached.

- Process of taking photo and distribution of the pass, which will be designed to be easily recognizable by Transit and Recreation employees, continues to be discussed and will be communicated prior to roll out as part of overall communication strategy.
- Creation and deployment of a communication strategy with all necessary information so when the pilot is announcement, schools and community agencies can easily share with youth they serve.
- Integration of a mandatory orientation session in conjunction with the pass, to ensure youth are familiar with the transit routes, specifically those with recreation centres on route. In addition, this orientation session will also include a tour at specific recreation centres (similar to the existing Newcomer Tour). This will directly minimize the barrier of awareness that was expressed as a concern by Brampton youth.
- Metrics on the program will be reviewed throughout and following the pilot.
- Follow-up online survey will be required to be completed by the pass holders to learn about youth trends/patterns and gather valuable feedback on the program.

Benefits of the Pilot Program include:

- Engaging youth early in recreation centres will help develop core interests and an active lifestyle that support lifelong healthy habits.
- An outcome of attracting more youth to ride transit is that they will become lifelong transit users helping to increase the overall modal split for transit in the city.
- Giving youth the opportunity 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 by sharing information about the Explore Brampton pass and other City-led youth initiatives.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

Within Recreation, the value of the Explore Brampton Youth Pass is estimated at \$20,000, which is equivalent to 10 drop-in visits (average cost of \$2 per visit) for 1,000 pass holders. The revenue loss in 2022 is forecasted to be approximately \$10,000, estimating that 50% of these drop-in visits would have been purchased by pass holders otherwise. Costs will be absorbed within the Recreation 2022 operating budget.

Within Transit, the value of the Explore Brampton Youth Pass would be \$214,000, which is equivalent to two youth monthly passes (\$107/mth) for 1,000 pass holders. The revenue loss during the summer months is forecasted to be approx. \$60,000 and is dependent on the amount of Explore Brampton Youth Pass holders who would have

purchased those monthly passes otherwise, as well as the costs to market and administer the program. It is estimated that the Explore Brampton Youth pass pilot program will help contribute to additional youth riders and increase revenues by a sufficient amount in the remaining four months of the year to fully offset the revenue loss and costs for 2022, resulting in a net \$0 impact. Staff will monitor the youth ridership and revenue trending over the course of the pilot, including any data provided in the end of program survey.

If the program is to continue in future years, staff will include any required revenue adjustments as part of future budget processes.

Term of Council Priorities:

This report supports all of the term of Council priorities, 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.

Brampton is a City of Opportunities, improving on the livability and prosperity by focusing on education and employment opportunities, neighbourhood services and programs, and investment strategies for the jobs of the future. This program offers youth with unlimited opportunities to connect with programs and services offered throughout the city.

Brampton is a Mosaic, celebrating its diversity 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.

Brampton is a Green City, building sustainability through improving transit and active transportation opportunities. The program offers youth a chance to experience transit and become a life-long user.

Brampton is a Healthy and Safe City, focused on improving mental health and encouraging active and healthy life styles. 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.

Brampton is a well-run City, improving day-to-day operations by streamlining service delivery and leveraging partnerships for collaboration and advocacy. Brampton Transit and Recreation are partnering to provide a collective service that helps youth in Brampton gain access to programs and services throughout the city.

Other Strategic Alignments:

The Explore Brampton Youth Pass also aligns with the goals of the [Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy's](#) (Appendix D) 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.

Conclusion:

This report has been prepared to provide Council with a proposed pilot program in 2022 for a free Explore Brampton Youth Pass. The proposed Explore Brampton Youth Pass will raise awareness of what is available to youth through Brampton Recreation and get them comfortable using public transit.

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Attachments:

Appendix A – 2016 Youth Engagement Survey
Appendix B – Council Resolution RM 79/2019
Appendix C – Youth Hub Consultation Summary Report
Appendix D – Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy
Appendix E – Draft User Fee By-Law 380-2003 Amendment