

Guelph Transit **Fare Strategy**

On your way to a fare future

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Executive summary

Introduction

The Guelph Transit Future Ready Action Plan (GTFRAP) was approved by Council in 2021 and aims to deliver a more competitive, convenient, and reliable transit system that meets the community's needs today and beyond, over the next decade. Together, the GTFRAP and the Fare Strategy will act as the foundation for the Guelph Transit Business Plan.

The Guelph Transit Fare Strategy is a comprehensive review and analysis of the fare system, including fare programs, policies, pricing, payment options, and structures. Using best practices, industry standards, and community engagement results, staff have developed recommendations for changes to the fare system that will modernize policies and incentivize ridership.

The goal of the Fare Strategy is to meet the needs of customers today and in the future by creating an affordable, attractive, and accessible fare system. The Fare Strategy will also enhance the customer experience by providing a simplified fare structure, implementing new fare programs, and offering new payment options.

Process

The Fare Strategy was built on a detailed analysis of the existing fare system, municipal comparators practices, and public feedback on the fare system options. The analysis included reviewing existing City plans to ensure the resulting recommendations align with long-term goals. The following details the streams of information used in creating this document:

- **Municipal comparators:** Guelph Transit's fare system was reviewed against that of nine Council-approved municipal comparator transit agencies in Ontario. Information on the comparators' fare systems was gathered via the Canadian Urban Transit Association's (CUTA) annual data, online research, and surveys/conversations with staff.
- **Case studies:** Staff researched other transit agencies from around the world that exemplify best practices, innovative fare programs, and unique fare structures. The contextual applicability and financial feasibility were assessed for each example in terms of viability for implementation in Guelph.
- **Community engagement:** Feedback was sought from the public through a range of online and in-person techniques. These techniques

included surveys, workshops, question and answer forums, open houses, and intercept activities.

Key reasons for the Fare Strategy

Existing fare system

Guelph Transit's existing fare system includes multiple operating policies, a fare structure with identified fare categories, various payment options, and several fare programs. However, there are clear gaps in policies, fare categories, and eligibility requirements. Additionally, there are payment options and fare programs that could be explored to modernize the fare system, attract ridership, and make full use of the new electronic fare management system (EFMS).

Guelph plans and strategies

Guelph plans and strategies identify transit as integral to moving throughout the City. The goals of many of these plans aim to increase the transit modal share and get people out of cars which the Fare Strategy will contribute to when paired with the GTFRAP.

Many of these plans also focus on providing equitable, affordable, and accessible transit options. The recommendations of the Fare Strategy will further support these initiatives.

Specifically, in terms of the City's Strategic Plan, the Fare Strategy will help to achieve goals under the following pillars:

- **Navigating our future:** The Fare Strategy will encourage transit ridership and contribute to achieving modal share goals.
- **Sustaining our future:** The Fare Strategy will indirectly contribute to reduced greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change by incentivizing ridership to reduce the number of vehicles on the road.
- **Powering our future:** The Fare Strategy will strengthen Transit's existing relationships and build more collaborative partnerships with businesses through new fare programs.
- **Working together for our future:** The Fare Strategy recommendations are the result of exploring new funding options and partnerships to ease taxes for residents and businesses.

Fare Strategy recommendations

As a result of the review and analysis conducted, staff have compiled 16 recommendations that will update the fare system to be more attractive, accessible, and affordable for customers.

Fare policies

1. OnYourWay fare cards

All fare program users must have an OnYourWay fare card, except for U Pass users. New OnYourWay fare cards cost \$5 to purchase, unless otherwise specified, and replacement OnYourWay fare cards will cost \$5 for all users.

Eligible users of specialty free fare programs receive their first OnYourWay card free of charge. Users must renew their card every five (5) years. The following programs fall under this condition:

- CNIB card
- Veterans card
- Personal Assistant for Leisure Activities (PAL) card
- Retired Transit Operators' card
- Welcome to Guelph card (not eligible for renewal)

Eligible users of specialty discounted fare programs must renew their card annually. The following programs fall under this condition:

- City of Guelph Employee Pass
- Corporate Pass

2. Transfers

The transfer time should always be equal to half of the longest route's cycle time, plus 15 minutes. Therefore, the transfer time should be maintained at 60 minutes.

3. Bus bay rentals

The cost of renting a bus bay at Guelph Central Station will increase to \$770 per month per bus bay effective January 1, 2024, resulting in additional revenue of \$3,600 in 2024. The monthly bus bay rental rate will be reviewed annually and adjusted to keep pace with cost increases in the terminal budget.

4. Bus charters

Bus charter rates will be reviewed and updated annually to match cost increases as outlined in the revenue budgeting policy.

5. Financial performance indicators

A more holistic set of financial performance indicators, including the revenue to cost (R/C) ratio, which considers service levels and aligns with the

revenue budgeting policy, should be adopted during the 2024-2027 multi-year budget. An annual review of the financial performance indicators will be conducted and measured against Guelph Transit's municipal comparators.

Fare programs

1. Kids Ride Free program

The Kids Ride Free program (children aged 12 and under) should be made permanent at an annual net budget impact of \$155,100. An operating budget in the amount of \$38,100 for clerical resources to support the program and a revenue loss of \$117,000 in 2024.

2. Corporate Pass program

Transit staff will develop a new Corporate Pass program with an increase to budgeted revenue of \$18,700 in 2024. The existing program will be phased out and the new program will be launched in 2024.

3. Travel Training program

Transit staff will develop a diverse Travel Training program to meet the needs of various groups, to be launched in 2024. The program will provide free rides to new customers taking part in the program (up to the value of a monthly pass). The program will be developed at no financial impact and will be offered by existing staff.

4. City of Guelph employee pass program

Transit staff will work with Parking and Human Resources staff to enhance the user experience and expand the program so that all City employees are eligible, including casual part-time, co-op students, summer students, and contract employees.

City Hall staff, regardless of employment status, are eligible for a transit pass at 100 per cent discount; all other employees are eligible for a 50 per cent discount. The discounts are taxable benefits and are managed by Human Resources.

Based on historical enrollment in the program, it is assumed the program will continue to operate with minimal financial impact.

5. Fare Capping Loyalty program

The traditional monthly pass program should be transitioned into a pay-as-you-go program, known as a Fare Capping Loyalty program, at a capital cost of \$36,300 funded from the existing capital budget (TC0076) and no operating budget impacts. The fare cap should be set at 34 rides for all fare categories.

If the Fare Capping Loyalty program is not approved, the monthly pass program should be maintained and prices should be increased to the

proposed adult and concession fare cap maximum prices of \$95.20 and \$76.50, resulting in additional revenue of \$329,000.

6. TaxiSCRIP program

The maximum number of taxiSCRIP coupon books that can be purchased each month be increased from two to three. The minor additional cost of \$6,300 can be accommodated within the existing operating budget.

Fare structure and pricing

1. Fare structure

The flat fee age-based fare structure will be maintained, and the term concession fares will be adopted to refer to age-based discounts. All users eligible for concession fares will receive the same discount. These users are:

- Kids (if the Kids Ride Free program is not continued)
- Youth
- Post-secondary students
- Seniors

2. Fare pricing (September 2023)

The cash fare will be increased from \$3.00 to \$3.25, and the debit/credit bank card fare will be introduced at the same rate as cash (\$3.25).

The adult single ride fare will be maintained at \$2.80. The concession single ride fare will be maintained at \$2.25 and will be expanded to include post-secondary students (except for the University of Guelph students).

The adult monthly fare cap should be set to 34 rides, amounting to a maximum of \$95.20 per month. The monthly concession fare cap should also be set to 34 rides, amounting to a maximum of \$76.50 per month.

The day pass will be increased from \$8.00 to \$8.40, and the weekend pass will be eliminated.

3. Fare pricing methodology

The adult single ride fare price will always be the price that all other fare media prices are based upon, except for cash fare. The single ride fare will be increased by approximately two per cent every year, rounded to the nearest \$0.05 increment. Should costs increase significantly, a greater per cent increase may be required to support the revenue budget policy.

Concession fares will always be 20 per cent less than an adult single ride fare, rounded to the nearest \$0.05 increment. The price of day passes will always be the equivalent of three adult single ride fares.

The cash fare will be increased in \$0.25 increments every two years. The debit and credit bank card fare will always be the same price as the cash fare.

All changes in prices will be aligned with the revenue budgeting policy.

Payment options

1. Self-service terminals

Three self-service terminals will be purchased for fare card reloading (by debit or credit card), at a cost of \$77,600 funded from the existing capital budget. The terminals will be installed at:

- ServiceGuelph at City Hall
- West End Community Centre
- Victoria Road Recreation Centre

An operating budget in the amount of \$2,900 annually, starting in 2024, be a referred to the 2024-2027 multi-year budget.

2. Debit and credit fare payment

Debit and credit bank cards should be accepted on buses, at a cost of \$215,700 funded from the existing capital budget, pending a supportive business case. An operating budget in the amount of \$30,100 annually, starting in 2025, will be referred to the 2024-2027 multi-year budget.

Financial summary

Net operating costs

The operating financial impact of the Fare Strategy in 2023 is \$5,200 in additional revenue and between 2024 to 2027 is an increase of \$151,900 for a total of \$157,100 in revenue which is partially offset by an increase in operating costs of \$75,400 resulting in an overall net reduction to the tax support of transit of \$81,700. If approved, these financial impacts would be included in the 2024-2027 multi-year budget. The largest driver of this impact is the Kids Ride Free Program with a net cost of \$155,100 which is made up of a revenue loss of \$117,000 and an operating cost of \$38,100 for a staffing resource.

Table 1. Estimated revenue from the implementation of the Fare Strategy recommendations.

Revenue	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Fare pricing changes	\$5,200	\$10,200	\$52,100	\$121,500	\$51,500
Fare policies	-	\$6,100	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$2,100
Fare programs	-	\$(98,300)	\$1,600	\$400	\$500
Total	\$5,200	\$(82,000)	\$55,800	\$124,000	\$54,100

Table 2. Estimated expenses from the implementation of the Fare Strategy recommendations.

Expense	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Kids Ride Free program (staff support)	-	\$38,100	-	-	-
Operating impacts from capital	-	\$2,900	\$30,100	\$2,100	\$2,200
Total	-	\$41,000	\$30,100	\$2,100	\$2,200

Capital investments

The capital costs to implement fare capping, bank card fare payments, and self-service terminals is \$329,600 which would be funded out of Transit’s existing capital budget for EFMS enhancements (TC0076).

Table 3. Capital costs of Fare Strategy projects.

Fare Strategy project	Capital cost
Fare capping loyalty program	\$36,300
Bank card tapping farebox payments	\$215,700
Self-service reload terminals	\$77,600
Total	\$329,600

Staff resources

Guelph Transit had previously forecasted the need for additional staff resources in 2024 and 2025. The Fare Strategy recommendations further support the need for these resources that will be referred to the 2024-2027 multi-year budget process.

Next steps

With the City of Guelph rapidly growing and changing, a mode share shift is necessary to accommodate the travel needs of a larger population. Paired with the GTFRAP, the Fare Strategy will help build ridership to meet mode share targets set out in the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) and the DC study. The Fare Strategy supports the City’s plans, strategies and policies that aim for transit to be affordable, accessible, and equitable. The

recommendations outline the actions that Guelph Transit should take to achieve these goals while modernizing the fare system and making transit a more attractive mode of transportation.

The Guelph Transit Fare Strategy is being provided to the City of Guelph Council for its consideration and support to move forward with the implementation of the Fare Strategy recommendations.

1. That the Kids Ride Free program (children aged 12 and under) outlined in Attachment 1, Section 6.3.2 to report PS-2023-102 be made permanent and that the budget impacts as outlined in report PS-2023-102 be included in the 2024-2027 Multi-year Budget.
2. That the Fare Capping Loyalty program, outlined in Attachment 1, Section 6.3.1 to report PS-2023-102, be approved and that the budget impacts as outlined in report PS-2023-102 be included in the 2024-2027 Multi-year Budget.
3. That staff be delegated the authority to proceed with the remaining initiatives recommended in Attachment 1 to report PS-2023-102.

If approved, the goal is to begin implementation of fare pricing changes in September 2023 and implementation of fare programs and payment options in 2024 and 2025.

Once the implementation of the Fare Strategy recommendations has begun, Transit staff will monitor the performance of the fare system changes. The updated list of performance indicators will be used to conduct an annual review, and more frequent reviews as needed, to ensure Guelph Transit stays aligned with City goals and stays on par with municipal comparators.

Staff will continue to collect public feedback to ensure the Fare Strategy stays relevant and make changes where needed and where possible.

1. Introduction

In 2019, the Guelph Transit Business Service Review was conducted to identify what transit does well and what needs to change. The review recommended that a Guelph Transit Business Plan be developed in alignment with the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) to provide direction for transit service.

The Guelph Transit Future Ready Action Plan (GTFRAP) was approved by Council in 2021 and aims to deliver a more competitive, convenient, and reliable transit system that meets the community's needs today and beyond, over the next decade. Together, the GTFRAP and the Fare Strategy will act as the foundation for the Business Plan. These plans will work towards growing ridership to achieve the TMP's goal of a 15 per cent transit mode share by 2051.

The Guelph Transit Fare Strategy is a comprehensive review and analysis of the fare system, including fare programs, policies, pricing, payment options, and structures. Using best practices, industry standards, and community engagement results, staff have developed recommendations for changes to the fare system recommendations that will modernize the fare system and incentivize ridership.

The goal of the Fare Strategy is to meet the needs of customers today and in the future by creating an affordable, attractive, and convenient fare system. The Fare Strategy will also enhance the customer experience by providing a simplified fare structure, implementing new fare programs, and offering new payment options.

The Fare Strategy will ensure Guelph Transit is future ready by working to meet the City's goals, particularly under the Strategic Plan pillar of "Navigating our future."

1.1 Project objectives

To guide the development of the Fare Strategy, the following main and supporting objectives were identified.

1.1.1 Main objective

Create a detailed Fare Strategy to guide fare programs, policies, pricing, payment options, and structure that will work with the GTFRAP to set the course for Guelph Transit over the next 10 years.

The resulting plan should align with City goals and focus on affordability, attractiveness, convenience, reliability, equity, and accessibility for customers.

1.1.2 Supporting objectives

To achieve the main objective, the following supporting objectives were identified as key outcomes of the Fare Strategy.

- Explore and implement fare incentive programs and partnerships to increase ridership.
- Reward existing riders and attract new riders with fare programs.
- Update Guelph Transit’s fare structure and pricing to be on par with municipal comparators.
- Create a fare pricing methodology and schedule based on best practices.
- Update and implement fare system policies to fill gaps and modernize existing policies.
- Explore and implement convenient payment options.
- Introduce a more holistic set of financial performance indicators that considers service levels and aligns with the revenue budgeting policy and industry standards.
- Align with existing City plans, including the Strategic Plan, Community Plan, and Transportation Master Plan.
- Work in partnership with the Guelph Transit Future Ready Action Plan.

1.2 Process and timeline

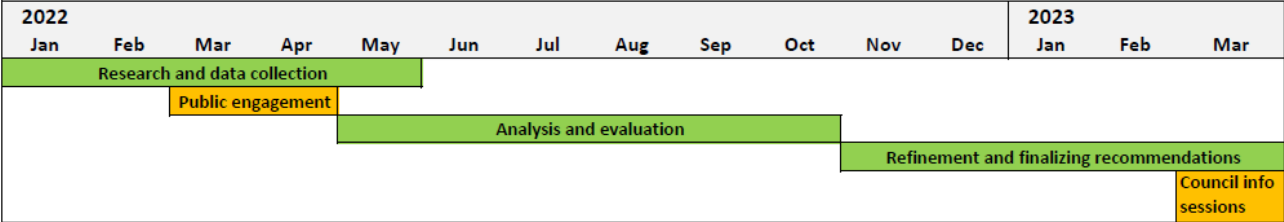


Figure 1. Timeline for the development of the Fare Strategy.

1.2.1 Research and data collection

The development of the Fare Strategy began with the research and data collection phase that took place from January to May 2022. During this phase, research was conducted on industry standards, best practices, and innovative fare system ideas. Information was collected from municipal comparators on their fare systems and additional case study transit agencies were identified.

Additionally, the public engagement campaign was held from March 21 – April 10, 2022, in which community members could voice their opinions on the fare system via online surveys, online workshops, online question and answer forums, in-person open house sessions, and/or in-person intercept activities. More information on the community engagement methodology and results can be found in

Self-service reload kiosks	Yes	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added option for reloading fare cards • Popular option in community engagement • Possibly reduce staff resources needed for reloading
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Appendix D: Public engagement results summary.

1.2.2 Analysis and evaluation

The next phase of developing the Fare Strategy was the analysis and evaluation of data collected. This phase took place from May to October 2022. During this phase, an analysis of the community engagement results occurred to determine which fare system options the public is in favour of or not in favour of.

An initial evaluation of the fare programs, structure, and payment options identified in comparator and case study transit agencies also occurred to determine what may be contextually applicable and financially feasible for Guelph.

Once the community engagement analysis and initial evaluation were completed, the fare system options were narrowed down to viable options only, and an in-depth financial analysis was conducted.

1.2.3 Refinement and finalizing recommendations

The last phase of developing the Fare Strategy was the refinement and finalization of recommendations, which took place from November 2022 until March 2023. This phase involved the review and refinement of options selected in the previous phase so the final Fare Strategy recommendations could be determined.

The recommendations were reviewed and refined with the assistance of Finance and Communications staff. The recommendations were then presented to Councillors via small workshops to help identify and answer questions prior to the final presentation to Council.

The complete Fare Strategy report was in progress throughout all phases along with the development of the Staff report in this final phase.

2. Transit and the City of Guelph

Key City documents were examined to direct Guelph's fare system goals to meet the needs of the community in the short- and long-term. The documents examined include *Guelph Transit Business Service Review (2019)*; *Guelph Transit Future Ready Action Plan, 2021-2031*; *Guelph Transportation Master Plan (2022)*; *City's Strategic Plan, 2019-2023*; *Envision Guelph: Guelph Official Plan (2018)*; *A United Vision: Guelph's Community Plan*; *Parking Master Plan (2015)*; *Downtown Parking Study (2023)*; and the revenue budgeting policy. The impact of each of these documents on the Fare Strategy are outlined below.

2.1 Guelph Transit Business Service Review, 2019

The [Guelph Transit Business Service Review](#) was approved by Council in 2019 and provided 12 recommendations around staffing and service level changes, service standards, funding and fare pricing guidelines, and investigating the viability and feasibility of new technology options.

One of the recommendations moved by council was to “[set] a funding and fare pricing policy based on a target net revenue to cost (R/C) ratio of between 40 and 45 per cent to support service and ongoing service improvements while reducing the potential financial impacts to customers.”

A review of the fares did not occur as part of the Business Service Review; however, it represented the need to conduct a review. This has resulted in the completion of the Fare Strategy to not only review fares but conduct a more holistic analysis of the fare system.

Together, the GTFRAP and the Fare Strategy will function as the foundation for the Guelph Transit Business Plan, which the Business Service Review also identified a need for.

2.2 Guelph Transit Future Ready Action Plan, 2021-2031

The [Guelph Transit Future Ready Action Plan](#) (GTFRAP) was approved by council in 2021 and aims to deliver a more competitive, convenient, and reliable transit system that meets the community's needs today and beyond, over the next decade. The GTFRAP outlines the future transit network that

resulted from a comprehensive route review of the existing transit system and from community engagement.

One of the recommendations moved by Council was “that the Revenue to Cost (R/C) ratio targets for fare increases from the 2019 Transit Business Service Review be paused until the completion of the upcoming Transit Fare Strategy.” As part of the Fare Strategy, methodology for how and when fare increases should occur has been researched by looking at municipal comparators, industry standards, and financial metrics captured by CUTA. Recommendations for determining fare pricing and increases have been outlined in this report.

In addition, the industry standard is that, in total, all else being equal, a 3 per cent increase in fare prices will reduce ridership by 1 per cent. However, as the Future Ready Action Plan will increase service levels and provide service expansion, fare increases are generally more accepted when users can see that their money is going towards creating a better transit network.¹

The Fare Strategy along with the GTFRAP will provide the foundation for the future Guelph Transit Business Plan.

2.3 Transportation Master Plan

The [Transportation Master Plan](#) (TMP) was approved by council in 2022 and aims to achieve a safe, efficient, and reliable transportation system for everyone.

The vision of the TMP is that “transportation in Guelph will be safe, equitable, sustainable, complete, affordable, and supportive of land use.” Equity focuses on making transportation geographically equitable so people can complete their trips comfortably, regardless of if they own a vehicle. Sustainability focuses on minimizing the negative impacts of a person’s trip on the environment. Affordability focuses on making transportation affordable for the user and making the most financially efficient use of our investments.

Regarding transit specifically, the goals include making transit “more convenient and simpler to understand” as well as “[promoting] transit as a mode of travel - desirable, affordable, and environmentally sustainable.” The Fare Strategy will simplify the fare system and play a key role in making transit sustainable and affordable for residents of Guelph.

¹ [Transit Fare Policy: An International Best Practices Review for Metro Vancouver](#)

Paired with the Guelph Transit Future Ready Action Plan, the Fare Strategy will help to achieve the TMP goal of making transit service competitive to driving and reduce greenhouse gas emissions toward net zero. Specifically, new fare programs with the future network changes will increase ridership and help reach the 2051 mode share target for transit of 15 per cent.

2.4 City's Strategic Plan, 2019-2023

The [Strategic Plan](#) establishes the areas of focus over the coming years that reflect community goals. The Strategic Plan identifies five key pillars:

- Powering our future – an economy that empowers us
- Sustaining our future – an environment that sustains us
- Navigating our future – a transportation network that connects us
- Working together for our future – a modern government that works with us
- Building our future – a community that supports us

While transit is central to the “Navigating our future” pillar, the Fare Strategy also aligns with the “Powering our future” pillar, “Sustaining our future” pillar, and the “Working together for our future” pillar.

Navigating our future

The main goals of this pillar are to “foster easy, accessible movement” in the community and to “provide attractive, affordable, and reasonable transportation options for everyone.” The Fare Strategy aims to assess the existing fare system and recommend changes as well as new policies and programs to provide attractive and affordable transit options. By doing so, the Fare Strategy will encourage transit ridership and contribute to achieving the key performance indicator of increasing the “per cent change of non-auto mode share” under this pillar.

Powering our future

Under this pillar, a main goal is to “help businesses to succeed and add value to the community.” The Fare Strategy will improve and enhance the Corporate Pass program that will allow businesses to support their staff by partially subsidizing their employees’ bus passes. This will strengthen Transit’s existing relationships and build more collaborative partnerships with businesses that could result in future benefits, such as businesses sponsoring events and/or participating in the adopt-a-stop program.

Sustaining our future

A key goal under this pillar is to “respond to climate change and prepare Guelph for a net-zero-carbon future.” The Fare Strategy aims to incentivize ridership through providing new fare programs and making transit an affordable mode of transportation. This will indirectly contribute to reduced greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change by reducing the number of vehicles that are on the road.

Working together for our future

The goal to “develop a long-term financial and resource strategy that is achievable and affordable” is located under this pillar. The Fare Strategy aligns with this goal as it has “[explored] new funding options, service-delivery models and partnerships to ease taxes for residents and businesses.” The recommendations of the Fare Strategy are a result of this exploration.

2.5 Envision Guelph: Guelph’s Official Plan (2018)

The [Official Plan](#) is prepared for the City of Guelph in accordance with the Ontario Planning Act, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and Provincial Policy Statement. It establishes a vision, guiding principles, strategic goals, objectives, and policies for Guelph; promotes long-term community sustainability and public interest in the future development of the city; and guides decision-making and community building to 2031.

Several sections within the Official Plan specifically identify policies related to transit fares. Section 5.1.1(i) identifies a modal share increase for transit to 15 per cent by 2031, and Section 5.3.2(iii) for TDM measures includes encouraging transit pass initiatives.

The Fare Strategy will contribute to increasing modal share by introducing new fare programs, including transit pass initiatives, which will encourage ridership and increase the modal share for transit.

2.6 A United Vision: Guelph’s Community Plan (2018)

The [Community Plan](#) lays the foundation for Guelph’s community vision and values. Through consultation, the plan identified seven broad themes:

- We are home
- We protect our environment
- We create value

- We are community
- We feel well
- We play and explore
- We move around freely

The final theme of “We move around freely” is central to transportation within a community. Within the vision of this theme, it is stated that, “Transit is a priority – it’s frequent and it’s affordable ... Increased use of transit and active transportation routes help address the traffic congestion that can follow rapid growth.” The strategic direction of this theme is to ensure that transit is available to all, inclusive of ability and exceptionality, and is well-connected. The Fare Strategy will play a key role in meeting the “affordable” component of this theme.

The theme of “We are community” is also a goal central to the Fare Strategy as the vision states that, “Everyone in Guelph is included and treated fairly and equitably.” Specifically, the Fare Strategy aims to “take a holistic view to consider and improve the interconnectedness of systems” and ensure that “our systems, practices, services, policies and governance structures are free from racism and other barriers to access.” The proposed policies, pricing, and programs under the Fare Strategy were created using a holistic and equitable approach to ensure inclusion of all Guelph residents.

The Fare Strategy will work in partnership with the Future Ready Action Plan and Transportation Master Plan to achieve the Community Plan goals together.

2.7 Parking Master Plan and Downtown Parking Study

While the [2015 Parking Master Plan](#) aims to incentivize transit usage, the Downtown Parking Study is currently underway, which will provide an update to the Parking Master Plan to encourage transit use in the downtown even more than before. Guelph Transit has been working with this team to identify areas where parking and fare policies can align to mutually work towards the City’s modal share goal as well as Strategic Plan goals. A mutual goal is to align the plans to make transit a more attractive option when travelling downtown.

2.8 Revenue budgeting policy

The revenue budgeting policy will be presented to Council in March 2023. The goal of the policy is to manage all revenue sources sustainably and

responsibly and ensure revenue is applied consistently through the corporate budgeting process. This policy promotes the ongoing review of user fees to ensure that they are reflective of the City’s policy objectives and approved cost recovery ratios are maintained.

The decision matrix outlined below assists staff in determining what type of funding a service should receive. Staff have assigned transit services to the “mixed service / partially tax supported” category, which has been bolded in Table 4.

Table 4. Revenue budgeting policy decision matrix.

Funding Category	Who Benefits	Type of Service	Cost Recovery Ratio Guidance
General service / fully tax supported	Community	General	0% to 5% (primarily taxes)
Mixed service / partially tax supported	Primarily the community	General/ Individual	5% to 50% (primarily taxes, some user fees)
Mixed service / partially tax supported	Primarily the individual	Individual/ General	50% to 95% (primarily user fees, some taxes)
Private service / non-tax supported	Individual benefit only	Individual	95% to 100% (primarily user fees)

3. Policy framework

Every transit agency and city are different, but there are several common characteristics of successful transit systems that have been identified by many sources. This section provides an overview of the industry best practices and policies that have guided the Fare Strategy recommendations.

3.1 Ontario Ministry of Transportation Transit Supportive Guidelines

The [Transit Supportive Guidelines](#) are based on transit-friendly land-use planning, urban design, and operational best practices. They are designed to

help transit professionals create an environment that supports public transit and promotes transit ridership.

These guidelines detail methods for transit agencies to attract and retain ridership. The fare strategies section aims to make transit more affordable and easier to use through providing fare incentives, simplifying fare structures, and introducing more convenient payment options.

3.1.1 Affordability

The following strategies were identified by the guidelines for ensuring affordability.

- Make fares more affordable by providing reduced base fares, free transfers, free fare zones or discounts for multi-ride tickets and passes.
- Transfers can be simplified by offering short-term, unlimited, and not directionally restricted ride passes to encourage transit use for quick errands.
- A day pass that is priced at the equivalent of two or three linked trips can also help to improve rider convenience, minimize fare administration, and minimize rider-operator arguments regarding transfer validity.

3.1.2 Convenience

The following strategies were identified by the guidelines for ensuring convenience.

Smart fare cards

- Implement automatic fare collection systems (smart cards) to improve fare payment convenience and efficiency.
- Expand fare card distribution and reloading options. This can be achieved by selling fare media at more retail locations or transit stops and implementing reloading by cell phone or internet.
- To encourage the use of pre-paid fare cards, offer discounts relative to cash or tickets.
- Account-based automatic recharging of smart cards can provide additional convenience for busy commuters.
- Program smart cards so that they automatically charge the lowest applicable fare. This can help to ease decision making and increase passenger desire to ride.
- The use of pre-paid fare cards can reduce boarding times, thereby improving transit speed and reliability while providing transit agencies with the benefits of improved revenue control and the financial

advantage of receiving payment before the cost of providing service is incurred.

Integrated fare policy

- Establish a regional integrated fare policy and collection system to allow riders to travel seamlessly on different transit systems across a single region.
- Integrated fare strategies include free transfers between systems, discounted fares between systems or use of a common fare card to increase the convenience and affordability of public transit.

3.1.3 Programs and incentives

The following strategies were identified by the guidelines for encouraging ridership with fare programs and incentives.

Partnerships

- Partner with employers, universities, retail stores, and organizations to offer fare incentives or integrated fare payment options and programs.
- Establish partnerships with retail stores or shopping centres to provide free or reduced fares to or from their services, or store discounts upon presentation of a transit ticket or pass. This alleviates the need for additional parking, provides riders a means of avoiding parking and congestion, and serves as a promotional tool for transit.
- Consider partnerships with special events and tourist destinations to provide free or reduced fares. This alleviates the parking and congestion concerns, provides convenience to tourists and eventgoers, and serves as a promotional tool for transit.
- Reduce single occupant vehicle use by partnering with parking to set hourly parking prices that exceed or equal transit fares.

Incentives

- Offer loyalty points or partner with a loyalty program, such as a reward miles program so that riders are rewarded for each transit trip they take or given an incentive for accessing certain services.
- Consider fare incentives and programs such as a U-Pass system. U-Passes provide all students and staff with access to free or affordable transit fares and are an excellent opportunity to increase transit ridership.

Promotion and education

- Develop special promotions, such as Transit Week, theme days, information sessions, community discussions, raffles, fare-free days, and other activities to raise transit awareness.

3.1.4 Changing demographics

The following strategies were identified by the guidelines for recognizing demographic trends and planning to adapt transit services to meet the lifestyle and travel needs of a changing population.

Aging population

- Due to reduced physical capabilities, many older people find using public transit difficult. To meet the needs of the growing number of elderly people, consider providing lower off-peak fares for seniors.

Newcomers

- Given the greater propensity of new immigrants to use transit and the fact that immigration is a major source of population growth in large centres, immigrants represent an important market for transit agencies. To capture ridership from new immigrants, consider providing transit training to inform new users about transit options, fares and system use, with content tailored to immigrant populations.

Families and Youth

- There is a growing trend towards more children and youth travelling by automobile than in previous decades which is contributing to lower activity levels within that age group. Car travel has replaced children and youth walking, cycling, and riding transit. Transit can be made better for traveling with children and more attractive to youth by offering discounted fares or free transit for younger age groups and/or offering timed transfers to enable multiple stops on one fare.

3.2 Ontario Ministry of Transportation Transit Technology Toolkit

The [Transit Technology Toolkit](#) aims to help small and medium-sized transit systems navigate the emerging landscape of transit technologies to determine which ones may be a good fit. The Toolkit covers technologies that may be beneficial across all departments of a transit system, including fare collection systems, which is of particular importance to the Fare Strategy.

3.2.1 Fareboxes

Fareboxes are a staple on public transit as they enable the collection of various fare media before or after boarding. Many transit systems use electronic fareboxes that count the fare payments as they are made. As fare collection increasingly moves towards cashless and ticketless systems via the use of smart cards and mobile payments, some transit systems have

simplified their farebox by returning to traditional gravity-based drop boxes to reduce cash maintenance requirements.

Both types of fareboxes are appropriate for medium-sized transit systems; however, simpler fareboxes make the most sense for agencies that have modern fare collection systems, like smart fare cards.

3.2.2 Smart cards and automated fare collection systems

Automated fare collection systems (AFCS) help simplify the payment process for customers by using fare card readers to conduct transactions quickly using preloaded fares. This system also allows transfers to be automatically loaded on fare cards after the initial fare has been paid, eliminating the requirement for a paper transfer. Not only do AFCS expand fare payment options, but they can improve the overall transit experience for customers by reducing boarding times and ensuring higher service efficiency.

Most medium-sized transit agencies have deployed options such as smart fare cards and mobile ticketing via AFCS.

3.2.3 Ticket vending machines

Ticket vending machines (TVMs) allow users to purchase fare media using a self-serve machine with an ATM-like interface. TVMs are convenient for customers because they allow for simple, fast, and safe transactions. These machines can improve the user experience with increased autonomy and interactivity.

Medium-sized transit agencies should consider implementing TVMs at major inter-modal points or hubs with high foot traffic.

3.2.4 Mobile ticketing

Mobile ticketing apps have emerged as stand-alone fare payment options as well as part of broader AFCS. Customers can use a mobile app to purchase valid fares and then use the device to either show the operator a valid fare has been paid or to scan the device on the farebox to conduct a transaction. If the mobile ticketing app is part of a broader AFCS, the app can be connected to a central account to manage and track customer preferences, usage, etc. Mobile ticketing can also contribute to faster boarding times.

Many medium and large-sized transit services provide an app for customers to utilize mobile ticketing.

3.3 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005

The [AODA](#) establishes accessibility standards for information, communication, and transportation, among other areas. Of particular importance to transit agencies is Part IV of the Act, Transportation Standards.

The following are relevant policies under Part IV of the Act.

s. 6 Self-service kiosks

Without limiting the generality of section 5, the Government of Ontario, Legislative Assembly and designated public sector organizations shall incorporate accessibility features when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 6 (1).

Large organizations and small organizations shall have regard to the accessibility for persons with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 6 (2).

In this section, “kiosk” means an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products or both. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 6 (5).

s. 38 Fares, support persons

No conventional transportation service provider and no specialized transportation service provider shall charge a fare to a support person who is accompanying a person with a disability where the person with a disability has a need for a support person. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 38 (1).

s. 46 Fares

No conventional transportation service provider shall charge a higher fare to a person with a disability than the fare that is charged to a person without a disability where the person with a disability uses conventional transportation services, but a conventional transportation service provider may charge a lesser fare for a person with a disability. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 46 (1).

s. 66 Fare parity

Where a transportation service provider provides both conventional transportation services and specialized transportation services, the transportation service provider shall ensure that there is fare parity between conventional transportation services and specialized transportation services. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 66 (3).

Where a transportation service provider provides both conventional transportation services and specialized transportation services, the transportation service provider shall ensure that the same fare structure is applied to conventional transportation services and specialized transportation services. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 66 (5).

Where a transportation service provider provides both conventional transportation services and specialized transportation services, the transportation service provider shall ensure that the same fare payment options are available for all transportation services, but alternative options shall be made available to persons with disabilities who cannot because of their disability use a fare payment option. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 66 (6).

3.4 Summary of comparator practices

Research was conducted to gather more information on the programs and policies that Guelph Transit's municipal comparators have in place through a Fare Strategy or similar plan.

The prices of all comparators' fare products were analyzed as well to get a better understanding of where Guelph lies in terms of current pricing.

A survey was sent to all municipal comparators in March 2022 to get a better understanding of the industry standards they use as well as what policies, programs, and payment options they have in place.

For more details on the comparator transit agencies research and analysis, see Appendix B: Comparator transit agencies

3.5 Summary of case studies and best practices

Aside from the policies and programs used by Guelph Transit's municipal comparators, examples of best practices and unique fare systems from transit agencies around the world were explored. These case studies included fare strategies such as:

- Distance-based and zone-based fare structures
- Monthly passes and fare capping
- Ridership incentives and fare programs
- Innovative payment options
- Promotional programs

All strategies were evaluated for financial feasibility and contextual applicability. Those that were the most viable were used to develop the Fare Strategy recommendations.

For more details on the case studies that were explored to aid in developing the Fare Strategy, see Appendix C: Case studies and best practices

4. Summary and evaluation of the existing fare system

Guelph Transit's existing fare system includes multiple operating policies, a fare structure with identified fare categories, various payment options, and several fare programs. However, there are clear gaps in policies, fare categories, and eligibility requirements. Additionally, there are payment options and fare programs that could be explored to modernize the fare system, make transit more affordable, attract ridership, and make full use of the new EFMS.

The following section summarizes the existing 2023 fare structure, policies, programs, and payment options as well as evaluates the strengths, issues, and opportunities of each where applicable. The fare system was reviewed and assessed to focus on improvements that can be made to enhance fare equity, accessibility, and affordability as well as improve the customer experience through the clear communication of eligibility and policies.

4.1 Fare policies

4.1.1 Fare categories and eligibility

Currently, there are four fare category groups which are defined as follows.

Child

A "child" is anyone aged 12 years old and under. An OnYourWay fare card is required for those aged 5-12 years old.

Youth

A "youth" is anyone aged 13 to 17 years old, or those aged 18 and older that are in full-time attendance at high school. Government issued ID or proof of high school enrollment is required.

Adult

An "adult" is anyone aged 18 to 64 years old.

Senior

A "senior" is anyone aged 65 years of age or older. Government issued ID must be shown upon request.

Table 5. Fare categories strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly defines who fits into what category. Explains eligibility for each category. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Child” encompasses all children aged 12 and under when there are different eligibility requirements for children under the age of 5 years old than those aged 5 to 12 years old. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Split the “child” category into “child” for children under the age of 5 years old and “kid” for those aged 5 to 12 years old.

4.1.2 OnYourWay fare cards

OnYourWay fare cards can currently be purchased at any of the 11 retailers or 10 City facilities throughout Guelph. All locations allow for the purchase of an adult fare card as no proof of eligibility is required.

13 of the 21 locations that fare media can be purchased at have blank cards available, which can be assigned to a reduced fare category. Reduced fare cards can be purchased and registered at ServiceGuelph in City Hall or at the Guelph Transit office. The remaining eight locations only have adult fare cards available for purchase.

All locations allow for the reloading of fare cards, regardless of the category the fare card is registered to, or fare cards can be reloaded online at onyourwayreload.guelph.ca.

Fare cards for age-based fare categories, even reduced fare cards, cost \$5 to purchase. Speciality fare programs provide the cards for free once eligibility has been confirmed. If a fare card has been lost, regardless of the fare category or program the card is registered with, there is a \$5 replacement fee.

Table 6. OnYourWay fare card fee policy strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines the cost of an OnYourWay card, replacement fees, where fare cards can be purchased, and eligibility requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not clearly state which fare categories and programs are required to pay for an OnYourWay card. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend the policy to clarify what programs are required to purchase an OnYourWay fare card.

4.1.3 Retailers selling fare media

Customers can reload fare cards online, through the mobile app, or in person at City facilities or retailers. While most customers reload online, providing options for reloading in person is important for providing equitable access to transit.

There are currently 11 retail locations across the city where residents can purchase and/or reload an OnYourWay fare card. These retailers, their hours, accepted payment types, and fare media types are listed [online](#).

When Guelph Transit and a retailer both agree to have fare media sold at a location, a fare product vendor agreement must be signed by both parties. The agreement states which fare media will be sold by the retailer, how users can purchase fare media, and if there are any requirements (i.e., \$5 minimum purchase to use debit or credit). If a retailer only accepts cash, they will receive 1.5 per cent in sales commission, but if a retailer accepts cash, debit, and/or credit, they will receive 4 per cent in commission.

The contract terms and policies were updated in June 2022 with assistance from legal and finance. As this agreement was recently updated, these terms will be maintained and are out of scope for discussion.

However, there is no policy in place detailing the content of the contract or criteria for determining where retailers should be located. As such, there is opportunity for introducing a policy that details how retailers are chosen to carry fare media.

Table 7. Retailers selling fare media policy strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recently updated contract that clearly details key information for retailers selling fare media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No formal policy in place to refer to.No criteria for selecting retailers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Create a formal retailer’s policy that aligns with the contract.Include criteria for selecting retailers within the policy.

4.1.4 Fare disputes

The current fare dispute policy aims to avoid direct conflict between operators and customers by asking customers to pay the proper fare and to

contact Transit afterwards. The policy is posted on the Guelph Transit website as follows:

“Guelph Transit routes and schedules are subject to change without notice and services may be temporarily disrupted due to unforeseen circumstances. Where possible, changes will be posted in advance to notify passengers of the adjusted hours and service levels. These changes are taken into account when calculating Guelph Transit’s fare structure. Discount, adjustments, extensions and refunds will not be issued as a result of closures or service disruptions. In the event of a fare or transfer dispute, passengers are requested to pay the proper fare and then contact:

Guelph Transit
 170 Watson Road South, Guelph, Ontario N1L 1C1
 519-822-1811
 TTY: 519-826-9771
 transit@guelph.ca

You will be required to provide the date, time, route, and vehicle number in order to proceed with your dispute.”

Table 8. Fare dispute policy strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly outlines what customers should do in the case of a fare dispute. • Clearly explains when discounts will not be granted and why. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not outline how fare disputes will be dealt with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend the existing policy to explain that decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, and staff will follow up with the customer once a decision has been made.

4.1.5 Bus charters

Guelph Transit offers charter services to the community to provide safe, affordable, and reliable transportation services to get customers to and/or from their events. Customers can fill out a charter request form [online](#) to have Transit staff provide a quote for their event. If customers choose to proceed with the charter, they will sign a contract that contains the details of the schedule, routing, and billing for their charter.

Guelph Transit’s bus charter policy was reviewed internally in late 2021 and was implemented in early 2022. The policy was updated to include an in-depth process for completing charter requests as well as revising the pricing to be competitive with other bus charter agencies while still covering the

operational costs (i.e., operator wages, fuel, maintenance) and maintaining a profit margin that will go back into recovering costs for items that the customer was not charged for (i.e., management staff hours, break operators).

The current pricing for bus charters is \$150 per hour plus fuel costs for every kilometre driven. A minimum of two hours is charged, even if the charter is operating for less than two hours. This is because the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) Article 14.08 requires that an operator be paid for no less than 2 hours of work when reporting to work, even if no work is available.

The hourly rate will be reviewed and updated annually to match cost increases as outlined in the revenue budgeting policy. Staff may choose to defer an increase if the increased hourly rate will cause the price of charters to be too expensive for potential customers.

Table 9. Bus charter hourly rate prices for 2022, 2023, and 2024 under the revised policy.

Year	Hourly Rate
2022	\$150
2023	\$150
2024	\$155

As part of the new bus charter policy, customers are required to pay a minimum deposit of 25 per cent of the quote price, although 50 per cent is encouraged. Customers are then charged based on actual kilometers and hours driven, so the actual billing price may be more or less than the quote.

As the bus charter policy was recently updated, there are no changes recommended. Staff are looking for Council’s support on the methodology for hourly rate pricing of charters.

4.1.6 Areas with no set policies

The following items have been identified as not having formal policies in place that Guelph Transit abides by. The following will be addressed with proposed policies in section 5.

- Guelph Central Station bus bay rentals
- Special event pricing
- Travel Training program

4.2 Fare structure

Guelph Transit’s current fare structure has remained relatively the same since the last fare increase occurred in 2016. Since then, the new EFMS that allows for the use of smart fare cards loaded with e-cash, e-tickets and monthly passes was introduced in 2020. Additionally, a pilot program for Kids Ride Free (aged 12 and under) was launched on March 1, 2022, and a sliding scale Affordable Bus Pass (ABP) pilot program was launched on April 1, 2022. Both programs were launched for one year trial periods, with the ABP program becoming permanent at the January 25 budget confirmation meeting.

4.2.1 Fare prices

Guelph Transit’s fare structure is an age-based system in which youth and seniors can ride the bus at a fare price that is discounted from the adult price. The pricing for different categories is displayed in Table 10 below.

Table 10. Guelph Transit's current fare pricing structure.

Age	Cash fare	E-ticket fare	Monthly pass	Day pass
Child 12 and under	Free	Free	N/A	N/A
Youth 13 to 17	\$3.00	\$2.25	\$68.00	\$8.00
Adult 18 to 64	\$3.00	\$2.80	\$80.00	\$8.00
Senior 65 and up	\$3.00	\$2.25	\$68.00	\$8.00

Currently, there is no formal methodology for determining pricing, rather pricing has been solely compared to council-approved municipal comparators to maintain consistency when fare increases have occurred in the past.

Table 11. Fare pricing strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain aspects of current pricing are on par with comparators. • I.e., cash fare is higher than ticket prices; cost of youth and senior tickets and passes are less than adult. • Fare prices are generally whole numbers, particularly cash, to avoid the need for nickels and dimes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no set methodology for determining pricing and how increases should be decided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce methodology for pricing to maintain consistency. • I.e., cash fare is always x per cent higher than an adult ticket; a youth and senior ticket are always discounted by x per cent off an adult ticket.

4.2.2 Day passes

Guelph Transit has day passes available for purchase for \$8.00, regardless of age. A day pass provides unlimited one-day travel on Guelph Transit for any day of the year. Day passes are considered a single pass on weekdays in which it is valid for one person only. Day passes are considered group passes on weekends in which it is valid for up to five people. Groups can be: One adult and up to four youths 17 years of age and under, two adults and up to three youths 17 years of age and under, or two adults.

Day passes can be purchased at any of the 13 City facilities and retailers that carry this type of fare media, as noted [online](#). To validate a day pass on the day of use, scratch off the month and day on which the pass will be used. Print the month and day in ink in the space provided on the pass. The pass is void if more than one day is scratched.

The following conditions apply to the use of a day pass. Day passes are valid on all regular Guelph Transit routes within the City of Guelph on the date shown on the pass. The pass, along with proof of age, must be submitted for inspection upon request. The pass may be confiscated for misuse. The pass is not transferable or refundable.

Table 12. Day passes policy strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a day pass option for unlimited travel. • Clearly defined instructions and conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is confusing having a day pass that can be both a single pass and family pass. • A day pass is currently only available in paper and may be inconvenient to purchase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove the weekend pass for simplicity. • Set day pass pricing relative to the price of an adult single ride. • Make the day pass available for purchase on an OnYourWay fare card.

4.2.3 Transfers

The current transfer policy gives customers a free 60-minute transfer after they have paid their initial fare. The policy is stated on the Guelph Transit website as follows:

“Passengers can transfer routes at any point where two routes connect. Passengers must request a transfer when they first board the bus if they require a transfer to continue along their route. When boarding a bus with a transfer, passengers must present the transfer to the driver unfolded and date-side up for inspection. Transfers must NOT be placed in the fare box.

A 60-minute transfer is automatically activated on your OnYourWay card when paying with a monthly pass or stored ride/dollar value. No additional fare will be deducted from your card if you tap again within that 60-minute period. If you pay cash, you will need to request a paper transfer from the transit operator. Paper transfers state the expiry date and time.”

According to best practices, a transfer should be short-term, unlimited, and not directionally restricted to promote the use of transit for quick errands.

Table 13. Transfers policy strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined instructions and conditions. • The 60-minute validity period aligns with best practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no methodology in place for determining the transfer time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a methodology for determining transfer time. • Review the transfer time annually to ensure the methodology is being followed.

4.3 Fare programs

In addition to the standard fare structure, there are several fare programs in place to support different groups and encourage ridership.

4.3.1 Kids Ride Free program

At the December 2, 2021, Council budget meeting, the following motion was brought forward and passed to initiate a Kids Ride Free pilot program:

- 1. A “kids ride free transit” 2022 pilot program for kids from 5-12 years old totaling a budget investment of up to \$125,000 in 2022 funded from the Tax Operating Contingency Reserve, to be launched no later than March 1, 2022, and that staff report back by Q4, 2022 regarding the results of the pilot.**

Guelph Transit launched the yearlong pilot program on March 1, 2022. To participate in the program, kids aged 5 to 12 years old were required to purchase an OnYourWay fare card and provide proof of eligibility to have the card registered in the Kids Ride Free program. Children aged 4 years old and under continue to ride free without a fare card.

By the end of September 2022, 490 kids OnYourWay transit fare cards had been issued, and 10,138 boardings had occurred as part of the program. Based on the monthly increases in boardings, by the end of the pilot, it is estimated that 625 kids OnYourWay fare cards will have been issued, and 25,007 boardings will have occurred through the program. The projected financial impact of revenue loss during the yearlong pilot program is \$56,265.

The pilot program was set to end on February 28, 2023, but at the January 25, 2023, confirmation budget meeting, Council decided to continue the program until the Fare Strategy could be presented and a final decision on the program could be made.

Table 14. Kids Ride Free program strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility is clearly explained. • The program has had very positive feedback and seen good uptake. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program is only one year trial. • Users experienced some confusion around requirements for riding free. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the program permanent and update the program description online to clearly explain program requirements.

4.3.2 Personal Assistant for Leisure activities (PAL) card

A [Personal Assistant for Leisure Activities \(PAL\) card](#) is available to people with a disability who require assistance to ride Guelph Transit conventional and mobility services. The PAL card is issued to the person with the disability and allows them to be accompanied by a friend, relative, support worker, etc., as their support person who participates as an attendant at no additional cost. A support person can be a different person each time, but they will help the person with a disability with tasks related to communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods or services.

There are certain eligibility requirements that must be met to obtain a PAL card. An application must be completed to determine eligibility for a PAL card, which can be obtained at City Hall or online.

Professional PAL Cards are available to qualifying agencies serving individuals with a disability to use with their clients/consumers as part of their treatment.

Table 15. PAL card program strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly explains who can obtain a PAL card and for what it can be used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No renewal requirement is in place so its difficult to keep track of active passes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a requirement for passes to be renewed every 5 years, excluding passes that have a built-in expiry date for temporary disabilities and injuries.

4.3.3 CNIB Pass

Visually impaired riders registered with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) ride free when a CNIB registration card is presented upon boarding the bus.

Table 16. CNIB cardholders ride free program strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program eligibility requirements are clearly defined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently, the pass is the user's CNIB card that must be verified by operators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition the CNIB Pass program onto the OnYourWay fare card. Introduce a registration form and a requirement for passes to be renewed every 5 years.

4.3.4 Veterans Transit Pass

Any Guelph resident who has served with the Canadian forces or its allies is eligible for free access to Guelph Transit or for free parking at select lots in the City of Guelph. The [Transit Pass for Veterans](#) is valid for use on Guelph Transit conventional, mobility services, and on-demand buses, and may not be used on any other municipal, provincial, or federal transportation systems.

Applicants are eligible to have either a Veterans Parking Pass or Veterans Transit Pass, but not both. Passes must be renewed annually.

Annual pass holders can change their pass type once per year at renewal, between October 1 and November 30. Pass holders will be required to complete this application form and bring it and their current pass to the Parking Office to switch to a parking pass, or to the Transit Administration Office to switch to a transit pass. Switching from a parking pass to a transit pass mid-year may be permitted if there are validated extenuating circumstances (i.e., loss of driver's licence).

Applicants are required to show proof of service by providing a copy of one of the following documents:

- Canadian Forces Certificate of Service or Discharge Certificate (front and back) or equivalent for the Merchant Navy and Allied Forces
- Veterans Affairs Canada Health Identification Card
- If currently serving, a letter from applicant's home unit confirming type of service, receipt of Canadian Decoration or three years of paid duty

- If police personnel, a letter from the applicant’s police service confirming his/her involvement in a NATO operation or a United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission
- Statement of service or discharge certificate showing service in Vietnam during Vietnam War in the United States forces or the forces of its allies during this war and proof of Canadian Citizenship at the time of service

Applicants must also show proof of Guelph residency via supporting documentation such as a copy of a current utility bill or a current rental/lease agreement.

The application can be printed or picked up from the locations listed online and returned to Guelph Transit administration.

Table 17. Veterans ride free program strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program conditions and eligibility requirements are clearly defined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those with a Veterans Transit Pass are not likely to switch to a parking pass and will always be eligible, so annual renewal is excessive. • Currently, it is a pass that is shown to operators and ridership must be tracked by the operator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switch renewal requirement to every five years. • Transition the Veterans Pass program onto the OnYourWay fare card.

4.3.5 Retired Transit Operators Pass

Retired Guelph Transit bus operators who were part of ATU 1189 ride free when the pass they were given upon retirement is presented upon boarding the bus. This is a requirement outlined in the CBA Article 28.02a.

Table 18. Retired transit operators ride free program strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program eligibility requirements are clearly defined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, the pass is a photo ID card that must be verified by operators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition the Retired Transit Operators Pass program onto the OnYourWay fare card. • Introduce a requirement for passes to be renewed every 5 years.

4.3.6 Corporate Pass program

The Corporate Pass program was launched by Transit in February 2008 as a pilot project, as directed by Council. The University of Guelph and Co-operators participated in the pilot, in which their employees could sign up for a monthly bus pass at a discounted rate that was subsidized by Guelph Transit.

The pilot was deemed successful after the first year, but more information was required, and it was extended for an additional year. In September 2009, the pilot project was extended yet again, but this time until the recommendations of the Transit Growth Strategy could be reviewed and assessed in 2010.

When the Transit Growth Strategy was brought to Council in July 2010, all recommendations were moved by Council, including "that Guelph Transit assess the feasibility of extending the U-Pass concept to employers in the City of Guelph."

While the feasibility was assessed, the pilot continued as normal. Once it was deemed that a U-Pass for employers would not be financially feasible, the Corporate Pass program was continued as is due to the success of the pilot and continues to operate in the same manner today as a legacy program.

Table 19. Corporate pass program strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive feedback has been received from those that participate in the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not an official program with no set eligibility criteria, conditions, or pricing rationale.• Transit currently covers the full cost of the discount provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance the program by introducing set pricing, conditions, and eligibility criteria.• Share the cost of the discount with employers.

4.3.7 Travel Training program

Guelph Transit hosts occasional Travel Training sessions to help existing and potential customers become more confident and independent with taking transit.

The Travel Training program supports and provides guidance for individuals living with a disability who are looking to use the conventional transit system. Participants can learn to ride the bus in the months of October and/or March with a volunteer who will share everything a user may need to know.

Table 20. Travel training program strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides potential and existing customers the opportunity to become more comfortable with taking transit independently. • Supported by volunteers who are regular transit users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing program is limited to offering training on a request basis, and the existing course may not be best suited for training diverse user groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and enhance the program to offer in class and on the bus training to encourage ridership. • Create training courses that are tailored to target user groups (i.e., kids, newcomers, seniors). • Offer free rides to participants to use newly obtained skills.

4.3.8 Mobility services taxiSCRIP program

The taxiSCRIP program provides discounted coupons for Red Top Taxi accessible vehicle service within the city limits of Guelph. To be eligible for taxiSCRIP, a passenger must have a permanent mobility services registration number and be registered as requiring the use of a wheelchair or scooter. Passengers may reserve a trip directly with the taxi company.

A \$40 taxiSCRIP coupon book can be purchased for \$20. A maximum of two taxiSCRIP coupon books can be purchased each month. TaxiSCRIP coupons do not expire. Books of taxiSCRIP coupons may be purchased at the following locations:

- ServiceGuelph, City Hall, 1 Carden Street
- Guelph Transit’s Administration Office, 170 Watson Road South
- Evergreen Seniors’ Centre, 683 Woolwich Street
- West End Community Centre, 21 Imperial Road South

Table 21. TaxiSCRIP program strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an alternative transportation option for mobility service users at a discounted rate outside of mobility service booking hours. • There are multiple accessible locations that users can purchase coupon books from. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of coupon books that can be purchased per month has not increased with the rate of inflation, so customers do not get as many rides out of a coupon book as they used to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of coupon books that can be purchased each month.

4.3.9 City of Guelph Employee Pass program

The City of Guelph Employee Pass program was introduced to full- and part-time permanent employees in 2006. This program provides City staff with two options:

1. **Annual Transit Pass.** An annual transit pass at 100 per cent discount can be obtained by any City of Guelph employee that works at City Hall. Employees must commit to a full year in the program and can only opt out at the end of the calendar year.
2. **Monthly Transit Pass.** City of Guelph staff can purchase a monthly bus pass at 50 per cent of the regular monthly cost. Employees may opt in or out of this program on a month-by-month basis.

City of Guelph Employee Pass program is a taxable benefit managed by the Human Resources department. This pass may only be used by the employee to whom it was issued and proof of employment, such as a corporate photo identification or a current pay stub, must be shown upon request by Guelph Transit staff. Passes will be confiscated by Guelph Transit staff if they are used by someone other than the employee who was identified as the program participant.

City of Guelph Employee Passes have recently been transferred over to an OnYourWay fare card that the user will tap when boarding the bus.

Table 22. City of Guelph Employee Pass program strengths, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths	Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides City staff with incentive to use transit. • Has been running successfully with help from Human Resources staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The monthly pass program is not available to all City staff. • The program is not advertised or promoted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the monthly pass program so all City staff are eligible to participate. • Work with Human Resources staff to enhance the customer experience and promote the program.

4.3.10 Community event sponsorships

Guelph Transit works with local businesses and/or the City as sponsors for community and special events. Local businesses can also approach Transit if there is an event they would like to sponsor. Once both parties have agreed to the sponsorship, a contract is signed detailing the cost of the sponsorship, and any advertising benefits the business will receive in return.

Currently, the following community events have free ride programs:

- Guelph Storm ticketholders ride free on game days from three hours before the game to the end of service (sponsored by a local business)
- Everyone rides free on New Year’s Eve from 7 p.m. to the end of extended service (sponsored by local business)
- Everyone rides free on Clean Air Day to encourage transit ridership and support lowering GHG emissions (subsidized by the City of Guelph)

As this program has been running successfully, this program will continue operating as is.

4.3.11 U Pass program

The U Pass program is an agreement made with the University of Guelph’s Central Student Association and Graduate Students’ Association (CSA/GSA) that each registered student pays for a bus pass as part of their tuition fees each semester. This allows students to use their student ID card as their fare card, with unlimited rides allowed for student’s that have paid their fees for the semester.

The cost of a U Pass in the fall 2022/winter 2023 school year is \$154 per semester per student and will increase by a small amount each year to keep up with rising costs.

The U Pass agreements are made in four-year increments, with the most recent contract signed for 2022-2026. As such, this program is outside the scope of the Fare Strategy and the U Pass program will continue to operate as per the contract.

4.3.12 GO Transit Co-fare program

Prior to 2022, the GO Transit Co-fare program provided discounted fares when connecting to Guelph Transit from GO Transit. Instead of the customer paying the full \$3.00 cash fare to get on Guelph Transit, riders would pay \$0.60 instead.

On March 14, 2022, the new GO Transit Co-fare program was introduced that allows passengers to ride Guelph Transit for free when connecting to or from a GO Train at Guelph Central Station, or any GO Bus at any GO Bus connection across the city. Passengers qualify to ride free on Guelph Transit buses on any service day or time when presenting one of the following:

- A valid single ride GO Transit ticket
- A valid GO Transit day pass
- A PRESTO card

As this program is managed and funded by GO Transit, it is outside the scope of the Fare Strategy for making changes.

4.3.13 Community Investment programs

There are several fare programs that are managed by the Community Investment department at the City of Guelph. As such, the following programs are outside the scope of the Fare Strategy, but they will continue to be monitored and evaluated by Community Investment in partnership with Transit.

Affordable Bus Pass program

Starting April 1, 2022, a new one-year sliding scale Affordable Bus Pass (ABP) pilot program began, addressing barriers for Guelph residents living on a low income.

Council approved a three-tier approach to the pilot at the December 2, 2021, budget meeting, which applicants qualify for based on their level of income under the LICO (Low Income Cut Off).

The monthly fees based on tiers are:

- Tier A (0-50 per cent of LICO): \$4.00/month
- Tier B (50-75 per cent of LICO): \$20.00/month

- Tier C (75-100 per cent of LICO): \$31.00-\$37.50/month (depending on age)

An ABP can be purchased monthly at a discounted rate by residents living in low-income households. Eligibility for each tier is determined by family size and household income, as specified [online](#).

The pilot program was slated to end on March 31, 2023, but at the January 28, 2023, confirmation budget meeting, Council decided to continue the program permanently.

Welcome to Guelph program

The Welcome to Guelph program provides free temporary access to a variety of City facilities and services, including the ability to ride Guelph Transit for free, to those that meet the eligibility criteria.

Welcome to Guelph cards are available to individuals who came to Canada as a refugee within the past 12 months and are currently residing in Guelph.

Cardholders show their card to Guelph Transit bus drivers when boarding the bus to ride free. This program will be transitioned to an OnYourWay fare card in 2023.

4.4 Fare payment options

The current methods of payment available on Guelph Transit buses are as follows.

4.4.1 Cash

Riders can pay with exact change on the bus by placing money in the farebox. Coins and bills are accepted.

4.4.2 OnYourWay fare card

Users can tap a preloaded OnYourWay fare card on the fare box. Fares can be loaded online or in person at City facilities or retailers with e-cash, e-rides, or a monthly pass.

4.4.3 Mobile app

Customers can scan the QR code in the mobile app that is linked to their digital OnYourWay fare card. The app can be loaded with e-cash, e-rides, or a monthly pass.

4.4.4 Transfers

Upon paying cash, a paper transfer can be requested which must be shown to the driver when boarding the bus. It expires 60 minutes after initial payment.

Upon tapping a physical or digital OnYourWay fare card, a 60-minute transfer will be automatically activated. When a user boards a bus within that 60-minute period, they will tap their card and no additional fare will be charged.

4.4.5 U Pass

University of Guelph students who have paid their tuition fees will have their U Pass loaded onto their student ID card. They tap their student card on the fare box when boarding and have unlimited rides each semester they are enrolled in classes.

4.4.6 QR tickets

Customers with a single use QR ticket can scan the ticket on the fare box. A 60-minute paper transfer may also be requested. QR tickets are available via special programs only.

4.4.7 Specialty cards

Users with specialty cards, such as a Welcome to Guelph card, PAL card, CNIB card, Veterans Pass, or Retired Transit Operators Pass, either show their card to the operator or tap their card on the fare box when boarding a bus.

5. Updated policies

The policies in this section are based on pre-existing policies for the fare system. These policies have been updated based on industry best practices, comparator policies, and, where applicable, community engagement. They have been updated to improve the customer experience by clearly explaining eligibility requirements and processes. Additionally, these policies will guide staff on how to proceed with internal processes.

5.1 Fare categories and eligibility

Although there are transit agencies that have been shifting to an income-based fare structure to promote equity, approximately two thirds of community engagement survey respondents wanted to maintain the current age-based fare structure. Additionally, Guelph has a unique Affordable Bus

Pass program that offers deeper discounts to eligible customers than most municipal comparators, meaning fare equity is already being addressed.

As such, the age-based fare structure will be maintained, and six fare category groups will be introduced, which are defined as follows.

Child

A “child” is anyone aged 4 years old and under. An OnYourWay fare card is not required. Proof of age is not required.

Kid

A “kid” is anyone aged 5-12 years old. Government issued ID is required to obtain an OnYourWay fare card registered in this category. A “kid” fare card will expire on December 31st of the year the user turns 13 years old.

Youth

A “youth” is anyone aged 13 to 17 years old, or those aged 18 and older that are in full-time attendance at high school. Government issued ID or proof of high school enrollment is required to obtain an OnYourWay fare card registered in this category. A “youth” fare card will expire on December 31 of the year the rider turns 18 years old. A “youth” fare card can be reactivated for an additional year if proof of high school enrollment is presented.

Post-secondary student

A “post-secondary student” is anyone who is enrolled in post-secondary studies and is not participating in a U Pass program. Proof of enrollment is required to obtain an OnYourWay fare card registered in this fare category. A “post-secondary student” fare card will expire on August 31st of each year. A “post-secondary student” card can be reactivated if proof of enrollment is presented.

Adult

An “adult” is anyone aged 18 to 64 years old. Anyone may purchase an “adult” fare card as government issued ID is not required. An “adult” fare card does not expire.

Senior

A “senior” is anyone aged 65 years old or older. Government issued ID is required to obtain an OnYourWay fare card registered in this category. A “senior” fare card must be renewed every five years.

5.2 OnYourWay fare cards

5.2.1 Retail locations

OnYourWay fare cards will continue to be available for purchase at the 11 retailers and 10 City facilities throughout Guelph. Any future retailers that are added will also have fare cards available for purchase. All locations allow for the purchase of an adult fare card as no proof of eligibility is required.

13 of the 21 locations that fare media can be purchased at have blank cards available, which can be assigned to a reduced fare category. Reduced fare cards can be purchased and registered at ServiceGuelph in City Hall or at the Guelph Transit office. The remaining eight locations only have adult fare cards available for purchase.

All locations allow for the reloading of fare cards, regardless of the category the fare card is registered to, or fare cards can be reloaded online at onyourwayreload.guelph.ca.

A new standard has been set that requires the top 50 bus stops by daily average boardings, excluding terminals, to be within a 400-metre walking distance of a reload location, where possible. The proximity of potential retailers to affordable housing and retirement facility locations will also be considered. Potential new retailers will be identified, and these retailers will be approached for partnership. The list of reload locations will be reviewed annually to ensure this standard is being met.

5.2.2 Fare card conditions

All fare programs will be required to obtain an OnYourWay fare card. By transferring all programs to a fare card, it makes it easier to manage these programs and keep track of unique users of each specialty fare program.

For consistency, all fare cards for age-based fare categories, even reduced fare cards, will cost \$5.00 to purchase while the fare cards for specialty programs will be provided for free once eligibility has been confirmed. If a fare card has been lost, regardless of the fare category or program the card is registered with, there is a \$5 replacement fee.

Table 23. Cost to purchase an OnYourWay fare card to participate in each fare program.

Fare program	Cost to purchase a fare card
Adult fares	\$5.00
Kids fares	\$5.00

Fare program	Cost to purchase a fare card
Concession fares (youth, post-secondary, and seniors)	\$5.00
Corporate Pass	\$5.00
City of Guelph Employee Pass	\$5.00
Veterans Transit Pass	\$0
PAL card	\$0
CNIB Pass	\$0
Retired Transit Operators' Pass	\$0
Affordable Bus Pass	\$0
Welcome to Guelph card	\$0

5.2.3 Fare media

Currently, OnYourWay fare cards can be loaded with e-cash, e-rides, and monthly passes. If a user loads e-cash, they will be charged \$3.00 each time they ride the bus, but if a user loads e-rides, it costs \$2.80 per ride. To simplify the fare media options and ensure regular riders are being rewarded with a discounted fare price, all users that load cash will be charged \$2.80 per ride.

Simplifying this system will free up administrative staff time assisting customers that accidentally loaded incorrect fare media.

5.3 Retailers' selling fare media

When a new retailer is needed, triggered by the new standard, potential retailers will be identified and approached for partnership.

When identifying potential new retailers, the following criteria must be met:

- The retailer must be within a 400-metre walking distance of bus stop(s).
- There must not be any other retailers already selling fare media within the vicinity.
- The retailer must be a convenience store, grocery store, or retail store of similar nature.

If an approached retailer is interested in partnering with Guelph Transit to sell fare media, a standard fare product vendor agreement will be drawn up. Among the standard terms and conditions, the agreement will determine the following:

- Which fare media will be sold by the retailer.
 - Adult fare cards, blank fare cards, and/or reloading of cards.

- Which methods of payment will be accepted.
 - Cash, debit/Interac, MasterCard, Visa, and/or American Express.
- Any minimum purchase requirements and/or additional fees.
 - The minimum purchase price required to pay with debit or credit.
 - An additional fee for using a point-of-sale terminal.
- What sales commission percentage the retailer will be awarded.
 - 1.5 per cent if only cash is accepted.
 - 1.5 per cent if cash, debit, and credit are accepted with additional fees.
 - 4 per cent if cash, debit, and credit are accepted with no additional fees.

Guelph Transit and the retailer must both agree to the conditions laid out in the standard fare product vendor agreement and both parties must sign the agreement for it to be valid.

5.4 Fare disputes

The fare disputes policy has been updated to the below.

“Guelph Transit routes and schedules are subject to change without notice and services may be temporarily disrupted due to unforeseen circumstances. Where possible, changes will be posted in advance to notify passengers of the adjusted hours and service levels. These changes are considered when calculating Guelph Transit’s fare structure. Discounts, adjustments, extensions, and refunds will not be issued because of closures or service disruptions. In the event of a fare or transfer dispute, passengers are requested to pay the proper fare and then contact:

Guelph Transit
 170 Watson Road South, Guelph, Ontario N1L 1C1
 519-822-1811
 TTY: 519-826-9771
transit@guelph.ca

You will be required to provide the date, time, route, and vehicle number in order to proceed with your dispute.

Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. Once the dispute has been investigated and a decision has been made, staff will follow up with the customer.”

5.5 Bus bay rentals

Currently, there are three bus bays at Guelph Central Station that are rented out to other transit agencies; however, there is not a consistent price they are rented at.

To rectify this, a monthly rate will be set for renting a bus bay. The monthly rate will be reviewed annually and will be set at a price that covers the maintenance and utilities costs of Guelph Central Station.

The budget for maintaining Guelph Central Station in 2023 is \$27,600. Therefore, the rate will be set at \$767 per month for each bus bay. This rate will be reviewed at the end of the year and adjusted to cover the 2024 budget.

5.6 Special event pricing

If there are multi-day special events, such as conferences or sporting events, being hosted in Guelph, the host organization may approach Guelph Transit about special fare pricing for attendees.

To ensure consistency, Guelph Transit may choose to offer the organization a discounted rate at concession fare pricing if the following conditions are met:

- The event is at least two days long and attendees will be taking transit multiple times through the duration of the event.
- Multi-day fares must be purchased for at least one hundred people by the host organization.

6. Fare Strategy proposals

The following section details the proposed changes to the fare structure, programs, and payment options as well as new financial indicators to track the performance of the Fare Strategy. The recommendations were developed with a focus on making the fare system more accessible and affordable for all current and future customers. Industry best practices, municipal comparator practices, and community engagement results were considered in the development of the recommendations.

6.1 Proposed fare structure

As Guelph Transit is a medium-sized transit system, it is recommended that the flat fee fare structure be maintained. Distance and zone-based fares are

not recommended because Guelph does not have clear zones or far enough distances to travel and this would only complicate the fare structure.

Additionally, it is recommended that the current age-based fare structure be maintained as it was favoured by the public during community engagement and income-based fares are already being addressed through the ABP program. If the income-based fare structure were implemented, it would also be difficult to justify the implementation of age-based fare programs, such as the Kids Ride Free program.

6.1.1 Transfers

To provide consistency in determining the length of time a transfer is valid, it is recommended that the transfer time should always be half the length of the longest route's cycle time, plus a 15-minute buffer. The cycle time refers to how long it takes for a bus to get from its start point back to the start point on a route. This methodology assumes that a user will not be riding the full cycle time as no routes exist where it would be in a user's best interest to ride the full cycle time.

In this case, the longest cycle time belongs to the Route 99 Mainline at 90 minutes. Half of the cycle time is 45 minutes, plus the 15-minute buffer period, equals a 60-minute transfer time.

As such, it is recommended that the 60-minute transfer time be maintained and reviewed annually to ensure the time aligns with the methodology.

6.2 Fare pricing

To ensure consistency, simplicity, and equity in fare pricing, now and into the future, it is recommended that the following pricing and pricing methodology be implemented.

6.2.1 Cash fare

To improve simplicity and ease of use, a base cash fare price that applies to all customers who choose to pay cash will be set. Concession fare discounts do not apply to the cash fare.

The cash fare will always cost approximately 10 per cent to 20 per cent more than prepaid fares to reward frequent riders. It is recommended that the cash fare price be increased in \$0.25 increments every 2 years, beginning in 2026, to minimize the number of coins required to pay.

It is also recommended that the cash fare be increased from \$3.00 to \$3.25 in September 2023 to offset inflationary costs that have not been accounted for since the last cash fare increase in 2011.

6.2.2 Concession fares

“Youth,” “post-secondary student,” and “senior” fare categories are the target groups for concession fares. Those that fall under the “kid” fare category would also be included in concession fares if the Kids Ride Free program is not continued.

Concession fares refer to discounts on adult fares that are given to anyone that meets the criteria of a target group. To simplify the fare structure and maximize equity across vulnerable groups, identical discounts will be applied to all target groups.

It is recommended that concession fares always be 20 per cent less than adult fares, rounded to the nearest \$0.05 increment.

6.2.3 Single ride fare (e-ticket)

For consistency in fare increases, it is recommended that the adult single ride fare, or e-ticket, price be the base price that all other fare media prices are based upon, except for cash fare.

It is recommended that the adult single ride fare be maintained at \$2.80, and the concession single ride fare be maintained at \$2.25, which is a 20 per cent discount on the adult single ride fare.

Beginning in 2025, it is recommended that the single ride fare be increased by 2 per cent every year, rounded to the nearest \$0.05 increment.

6.2.4 Day pass

To make the price of a day pass consistent with each fare increase, it is recommended that the day pass always be set at three times the price of an adult single ride fare. In addition, it is recommended that the weekend pass be eliminated to simplify the fare structure.

As such, it is recommended that the price of the day pass be increased from \$8 to \$8.40, which is equivalent to three times the price of one adult single ride fare (\$2.80). The day pass will be available for purchase from select retailers and can be loaded on an OnYourWay fare card as well.

6.2.5 Monthly fare capping

To simplify the fare structure, it is recommended that the monthly pass be transitioned into a pay-as-you-go program, known as a Fare Capping Loyalty

program. Fare capping is when a rider's total fares within a set period of times are capped at the equivalent value of an unlimited pass for the same period. Customers will continue to pay the same price per ride and once the customer has reached a set number of rides within a calendar month, they will ride for free for the rest of that month.

It is recommended that the monthly fare cap for adult and concession fares be set at 34 rides. If the cap is reached, the maximum a user paying adult fares will pay per month is \$95.20 ($\2.80×34), and the maximum a user paying concession fares will pay per month is \$76.50 ($\2.25×34). The proposed Fare Capping Loyalty program is further discussed in section 6.3.1.

6.2.6 Fare pricing structure

An updated fare pricing structure and new pricing methodology are being recommended to maintain consistency with municipal comparators and ensure the outlined cost recovery under the revenue budgeting policy is being met.

Why are fare increases necessary?

Guelph hasn't increased fares since 2016 and had the adult monthly pass rate been increased by 2.25 per cent annually since then, the current rates would be at approximately the same rates as proposed.

Guelph Transit has made many service enhancements since the last fare increase, such as expanding route 99 Mainline Sunday service hours, increasing midday frequency on several routes, and reinstating conventional service to the Hanlon Creek Business Park. Regular increases in fares will allow Guelph Transit to continue to make service enhancements and provide additional support for upcoming capital projects, such as new shelters at Guelph Central Station as well as digital signs at the University of Guelph bus loop, Guelph Central Station, and Stone Road Mall.

The new pricing structure aligns Guelph Transit's rates with our municipal comparators, and the regularly scheduled increases will help account for growing maintenance and inflationary costs.

Proposed fare pricing structure

To simplify the fare structure, the same discounts and fare caps have been applied to all concession fares. While the initial increase may seem high, this will bring Guelph Transit's fare prices up to par with our comparators. It's important to note that Guelph provides significantly more service than our comparators (i.e., number of routes and service hours), yet prices have not been increasing as this service has been added.

Additionally, the increased rate is further justified by Guelph offering the Affordable Bus Pass program, which offers a larger discount than most municipal comparators to low-income individuals who may not be able to afford regular transit fares.

If the proposed methodology and fare increase schedule are approved, the updated fare prices for September 2023 will be as displayed in Table 24.

Table 24. Proposed fare pricing structure for September 2023.

Fare category	Cash fare	E-ticket / single ride fare	Day pass	Fare capping maximum
Child	Free	-	-	-
Kid	Free	Free	-	-
Youth	\$3.25	\$2.25	\$8.40	\$76.50
Post-secondary	\$3.25	\$2.25	\$8.40	\$76.50
Adult	\$3.25	\$2.80	\$8.40	\$95.20
Senior	\$3.25	\$2.25	\$8.40	\$76.50

A fare increase will not have a significant impact on transit-dependent riders’ demand but can have an impact on discretionary riders’ demand. That is not to say that dependent riders will not be affected, but their demand is considered inelastic – that is, the price of transit will not change their choice to use transit. Conversely, where riders are discretionary, the price of transit can influence their transportation choice.

Furthermore, fare increases are generally more accepted when users can see that their money is going towards creating a better transit network, which the GTFRAP will do by increasing service levels and expanding the network. The fare increases paired with the Fare Capping Loyalty program will have a minimal impact on ridership, and growth is expected from the GTFRAP changes. The ridership impact is discussed further in Section 6.3.1.

There is an overall positive impact expected on annual revenue, which is further discussed in Section 7.1.

Proposed fare pricing schedule

After the initial increase in September 2023, an approximate 2 per cent increase will happen annually to account for growing costs due to inflation.

Table 25. Proposed fare percentage increase schedule for 2023 – 2031.

Fare media	2023*	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Cash	8.3%	0%	0%	8%	0%	7%	0%	7%	0%
Single ride (e-ticket)	0%	0%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Fare cap maximum (adult; concession)	19%; 12.5%	0%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Day pass	5%	0%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%

* Higher initial increases to bring prices up to what they would have been if inflationary increases had been accounted for each year since 2016.

6.3 Proposed fare programs

Through research into industry best practices, Guelph’s municipal comparators, and the results of the community engagement campaign, the following fare programs were selected as the most important to be implemented.

Other fare programs were considered and were deemed as contextually applicable, but not currently financially feasible. As such, Guelph Transit will continue to explore the viability and possible future implementation of other fare programs, such as a youth summer pass program and a seniors ride free day program.

6.3.1 Fare Capping Loyalty program

As mentioned in section 6.2.5, it is recommended that the monthly pass program be transitioned into a pay-as-you-go program, known as a Fare Capping Loyalty program. It is recommended that the fare cap be set at 34 rides for adult and concession fares, meaning a customer will pay a single ride fare each time when boarding, and once they have paid this fare 34 times, they will ride free for the rest of the calendar month.

Why fare capping?

Staff are recommending fare capping because of the affordability it provides our customers. As affordable transit is a key theme in many City plans, fare capping will contribute to achieving this goal because customers won’t have to decide whether to pay upfront for a monthly pass that they may not get their money’s worth out of. Fare capping will simplify the fare structure and

take the decision making out of the system because there is only one fare product to load, and customers will only pay for what they use.

Additionally, this program is designed to reward frequent riders without the need to determine if they will use transit enough each month to warrant purchasing a monthly pass. Fare capping ensures the best price is available to all riders, and makes transit more accessible, flexible, and affordable.

During community engagement, the Fare Capping Loyalty program was the preferred monthly fare program option at open houses and in the main Fare Strategy survey, receiving 44.7 per cent of votes in each (see

Self-service reload kiosks	Yes	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added option for reloading fare cards • Popular option in community engagement • Possibly reduce staff resources needed for reloading
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Appendix D: Public engagement results summary).

The financial impact of fare capping is offset by fare equity and is the key reason many transit agencies have transitioned from monthly passes to fare capping. Large transit agencies, like GO Transit, are leading the industry in fare capping. Guelph Transit wants to be a leader in the transit industry by transitioning to fare capping as we understand how it benefits our customers.

Fare capping impacts for customers

Currently, 35 per cent of customers who purchase a monthly pass do not ride enough to require a monthly pass. If the transition to fare capping is made, 71 per cent of customers using rides and e-cash will see no change in price or will have a savings each month while only 18 per cent would see an increase in price. The adult monthly pass customers who do not use transit enough to reach the fare cap of 34 rides would pay, on average, \$65.00 a month compared to the proposed rate of \$95.20 per month.

Fare capping impacts on ridership

As mentioned in section 6.2.6, fare increases may have a negative impact on ridership, but they are more accepted when users can see that their money is going towards creating a better transit network.

Generally, the industry standard is that a three per cent increase in fare prices will reduce ridership by one per cent. However, if the Fare Capping

Loyalty program is approved, there will be less of an impact to ridership than if the monthly pass is maintained. The ridership growth expected from the GTFRAP service changes will offset the ridership loss from fare increases.

Table 26. The impact to ridership for each fare category if monthly passes are maintained compared to if fare capping is implemented.

Fare category	Monthly Pass ridership impact	Fare Capping ridership impact
Adult	(5.7) %	(2.9) %
Youth	(3.8) %	(1.9) %
Post-secondary	(3.8) %	(2.7) %
Senior	(3.8) %	(1.9) %

Implementation

Fare capping would be rolled out to one category at a time and would not be mandatory until all fare categories had been transitioned. The transition period would be accompanied by an extensive communications campaign to ensure all customers understand how the Fare Capping Loyalty program works.

The Community Investment department is supportive of the Fare Capping Loyalty program and would explore fare capping for the Affordable Bus Pass program if approved by Council.

Financial impacts

To implement the Fare Capping Loyalty program, there is an impact of \$(36,300) from the existing capital budget and no operating budget impacts. It is important to note that, regardless of whether fare capping is adopted, or traditional monthly passes are maintained, the fare prices should be increased to the proposed amounts. The amount of additional revenue the Fare Capping Loyalty program will generate is approximately \$10,000 in 2024 versus maintaining the traditional monthly pass program which will generate approximately \$329,000 in revenue.

6.3.2 Kids Ride Free program

Due to the positive feedback received during the pilot, it is recommended that the Kids Ride Free program (children aged 12 and under) be permanently implemented.

Not only does the Kids Ride Free program provide affordable transit options for families with children, but by introducing children to transit early on, they become more comfortable with this mode of transportation and are more likely to become lifelong transit users.

From January 2020 to September 2022, there was a 15 per cent increase in youth and child boardings (ages 5-17 years old). Due to reporting limitations when the new EFMS was launched, staff were unable to accurately identify which boardings are associated with kids (ages 5 -12 years old) vs. youth (ages 13-17 years old). In addition, staff cannot determine the makeup of the 15 per cent as it could be due to COVID recovery boardings or new boardings associated with the Kids Ride Free pilot program.

Table 27. Boardings by month (ages 5-17 years old).

Month	2020	2021	2022
January	28,563	3,573	10,530
February	26,046	8,217	13,903
March	19,284	12,047	12,389
April	2,709	4,348	12,866
May	1,885	3,539	19,159
June	1,759	4,180	14,594
July	5,270	4,734	10,142
August	6,955	6,772	8,489
September	10,103	15,221	16,250
October	11,854	19,652	19,494
November	14,069	15,051	17,011
December	8,071	10,508	9,741
Total	136,568	107,842	164,568

Key findings from the community engagement showed that 90 per cent of survey respondents were supportive of making the program permanent. Additionally, respondents were asked if they could choose a single group to receive free fares, who would it be for? As this was an open-ended question, there were a range of responses, but the Kids Ride Free pilot program was the most popular choice with 30.4 per cent selecting this program. A second round of community engagement was conducted focusing only on customers taking part in the Kids Ride Free pilot program. The results of this survey showed that 90 per cent of respondents take transit nearly every day or a couple of times a week compared to only 70 per cent before the pilot began. All respondents were supportive of making the pilot program permanent (see

Self-service reload kiosks	Yes	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added option for reloading fare cards • Popular option in community engagement
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly reduce staff resources needed for reloading
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Appendix D: Public engagement results summary).

To implement the Kids Ride Free program permanently, there is a net cost of \$155,100 which is made up of a revenue loss of \$117,000 and an operating cost of \$38,100 for a staffing resource (see Section 7.3.3).

6.3.3 Corporate Pass program

As the existing Corporate Pass program has not changed since the pilot program began in 2010, it is recommended that Transit develop a new Corporate Pass program that is expanded to a wider range of customers and the current program be phased out.

The new Corporate Pass program would allow local businesses and groups to enroll and offer monthly passes at discounted rate for their employees or group members. A business that signs up for the Corporate Pass program will pay for a minimum of 10 per cent of each Corporate Pass purchased by their employees, and Guelph Transit will pay for an additional 10 per cent, meaning employees will pay for, at most, 80 per cent of their monthly pass. This program is ideal for groups of frequent riders, such as those who commute to work at least 3-4 times per week via transit.

A survey was sent out to a select group of businesses to gauge their interest in signing up for the Corporate Pass program, and 62 per cent said they believed the Corporate Pass program would have a positive impact on employee attraction and retention. Similarly, a survey was open to the public to gauge their interest in the Corporate Pass program. Fifty-five per cent of respondents said they would use a Corporate Pass if it were offered by their employer and 38 per cent said they would be more interested in continuing to work for their employer if a Corporate Pass were offered.

While a formal Corporate Pass program agreement will be put together with the assistance of the City’s Legal department, the following criteria must be met for a business or group to sign up for the program:

- The company signing the agreement must be a recognized business, corporation, or group (i.e., business association, condominium board, etc.).
- A minimum of 25 employees or group members must sign up for a Corporate Pass.
- The company must agree to pay for at least 10 per cent of each Corporate Pass purchased by an employee or group member.

- Participating employees must renew their Corporate Pass annually to continue receiving the discounted rate.
- The company must agree to set up a payroll deduction system to ensure payment for the passes is made at the start of each month.

It is recommended that Transit staff build the new Corporate Pass program to be launched in 2024. The new program has a projected annual budget impact of \$18,700.

6.3.4 Travel Training program

The current Travel Training program is limited in scope and by the infrequent training sessions offered. It is recommended that Transit staff develop a diverse Travel Training program that meets the needs of various groups, such as seniors, people with disabilities, and newcomers.

As part of this recommendation, new customers that participate in the Travel Training program will be awarded an OnYourWay fare card loaded with free rides, up to the value of a monthly pass. Staff will be able to track if participants continued to use transit after taking the training, which will provide data on new ridership and on the success of the program.

6.4 Continuation of existing fare programs

There are several existing fare programs that are recommended to be continued. The policies and eligibility requirements for these programs have been updated and outlined in the following section.

6.4.1 Required fare programs

There are several fare programs that are required to be continued due to binding contracts and regulations.

Personal Assistant for Leisure Activities (PAL) card

The PAL card is issued to a person with a disability who requires assistance to ride transit, and the card allows their support person to ride with them for free. This is a requirement through O. Reg. 191/11, s. 38 (1).

In 2022, the annual ridership was 2,005 with a financial impact of \$(5,614).

To obtain a PAL card, an application form must be completed to ensure the person with a disability meets the eligibility requirements. Once the application has been approved, the applicant will receive an OnYourWay card free of charge. The PAL card provides unlimited rides for a customer's support person and must be renewed every 5 years so that inactive cards can be removed from the EFMS.

Retired Transit Operators Pass

Upon retirement, Guelph Transit operators are awarded a lifetime transit pass that allows them to ride for free. The issuance of a free pass to retired transit operators is required under Article 28.02a of the CBA.

In 2022, the annual ridership was 252 with a financial impact of \$(706).

When an operator retires, they will receive an OnYourWay card free of charge. The retiree's card provides unlimited rides for the user and must be renewed every 5 years so that inactive cards are removed from the EFMS.

City of Guelph Employee Pass

City of Guelph employees will continue to have the option of an annual or monthly transit pass, depending on the City facility they work in. All staff will be required to obtain an OnYourWay card at the standard price of \$5.

In 2022, the total ridership was 7,885 with a financial impact of \$(22,078).

Transit staff will work with Parking and Human Resources staff to expand and enhance the program. The program will be expanded as an option to all City employees, including summer students, co-op students, temporary, and casual part-time staff. Additionally, enhancements to the program will be explored, such as automatic payroll deductions and promoting the program to new employees as part of onboarding.

6.4.2 CNIB Pass

The CNIB Pass program is recommended to continue as it provides increased independence to individuals with visual impairments and operates at a low financial impact.

In 2022, the annual ridership was 5,308 with a financial impact of \$(14,862).

If the program continues, CNIB cardholders will be required to show proof of eligibility to obtain an OnYourWay card enrolled in this program. Eligible customers will receive their fare card for free, and it will provide unlimited rides. Customers participating in this program must renew their card every 5 years so that inactive cards can be removed from the EFMS.

6.4.3 Veterans Transit Pass

The Veterans Transit Pass program is recommended to continue in partnership with the Parking Pass program.

In 2022, the annual ridership was 4,822 with a financial impact of \$(13,502).

If the program continues, veterans will be required to show proof of eligibility to obtain an OnYourWay card enrolled in this program. Eligible customers will continue to only be able to have a transit pass or parking pass, not both. Those that choose the transit pass will receive their fare card for free, and it will provide unlimited rides. Customers participating in this program must renew their card every 5 years so that inactive cards can be removed from the EFMS.

6.5 Proposed fare payment options

While all existing fare payment options will continue to be available, it is recommended that these options be expanded to keep up with emerging technology, industry best practices, and the results of the community engagement campaign.

6.5.1 Debit/credit tapping

To keep the available fare payment options on buses up-to-date and encourage ridership among infrequent users, it is recommended that the option to pay a fare with a debit or credit bank card be introduced.

During the community engagement campaign, the tap to pay option was a popular choice among participants. 35.4 per cent of survey respondents selected debit/credit, Apple pay, and/or Android pay as a preferred method of payment when boarding the bus. Similarly, 32.8 per cent of open house respondents also chose a tap to pay option as a preferred method of payment (see

Self-service reload kiosks	Yes	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added option for reloading fare cards • Popular option in community engagement • Possibly reduce staff resources needed for reloading
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Appendix D: Public engagement results summary).

To ensure frequent riders are still rewarded with lower prices and to cover the transaction fee, it is recommended that the fare price for everyone paying with debit or credit be equal to the cash fare price (proposed to be \$3.25 starting in September 2023). Customers will be able to tap their card on the farebox and can pay using a debit card, credit card, Apple pay, or Android pay.

The cost to implement bank card fare payment on fareboxes is \$215,700 funded from the existing capital budget. Additionally, an operating budget in the amount of \$30,100 annually, starting in 2025, is required to maintain and operate this fare payment option. The operating budget request will be referred to the 2024 multi-year budget.

Once the introduction of bank card fare payments has been successfully implemented, staff will explore the possibility of fare capping with debit and credit cards as a future fare program.

6.5.2 Self-service terminals

In addition to expanded methods of payment on the bus, it is recommended that three self-service terminals be purchased for fare card reloading and installed in high traffic public locations.

During community engagement, respondents that currently reload a fare card in person at a City facility or retailer were asked if they would be willing to use a self-service terminal if it were available at City facilities. 60.6 per cent of respondents said they would choose to reload at the self-service machine over reloading with a customer service agent (see

Self-service reload kiosks	Yes	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added option for reloading fare cards • Popular option in community engagement • Possibly reduce staff resources needed for reloading
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Appendix D: Public engagement results summary).

The locations that the terminals are proposed to be installed at are ServiceGuelph in City Hall, the West End Community Centre, and the Victoria Road Recreation Centre. The terminals would be available to customers that currently have a registered OnYourWay fare card for reloading of single ride fares/e-tickets. The terminals would operate with an interface like an ATM and payment could be made using a debit or credit card.

The cost to implement the self-service terminals is \$77,600 funded from the existing capital budget. An additional operating budget of \$2,900 annually, starting in 2024, is required to maintain the terminals. The operating budget request will be referred to the 2024 multi-year budget.

Staff will monitor the usage of the terminals and will determine if there is a need for more terminals at other locations in the future.

6.6 Performance indicators

Through the 2019 Guelph Transit Business Services Review, the target net revenue to cost (R/C) ratio of between 40 and 45 per cent was approved. The 2021 Guelph Transit Future Ready Action Plan recommendation to pause the use of this metric until the Fare Strategy could be presented to Council was also approved.

It is recommended that the proposed fare increase schedule, supported by a more holistic set of performance indicators that considers service levels and aligns with the revenue budgeting policy and industry standards, be adopted. This recommendation supports a more comprehensive approach to determining fare pricing as the R/C ratio alone is not an effective indicator of total financial performance.

CUTA releases annual reports detailing a variety of performance metrics for transit agencies across Canada. The following metrics have been selected to be analyzed each year to ensure Guelph Transit is on par with the Council-approved municipal comparators.

- **Average fare:** The average fare paid by a customer. Calculated by comparing the regular service passenger revenue against the total regular service linked trips.
- **Cost effectiveness:** Calculated by comparing the total direct operating expense to the total regular service linked trips.
- **Municipal subsidy:** Funding provided from municipal property taxes to support the provision of transit services. Municipal subsidy is the difference between operating cost, revenue, and other recoveries.
- **Net cost:** The total annual cost to provide transit services. It includes all operating and maintenance, debt financing, capital, and revenue.
- **Net direct operating cost per regular service passenger:** The relationship between cost of service and ridership measuring cost effectiveness. The expense or cost (not including revenue) to provide service for each passenger that utilizes the service.
- **Net operating cost:** The operating costs incurred to provide transit service. This includes salary and wages as well as purchased goods and services. Operating cost does not include capital costs or debt financing.
- **Net operating cost per hour of operation:** Calculated by comparing the net direct operating costs against the total hours of operation.
 - Net operating cost, within the specific service breakdown, includes all operating costs with the exclusion of vehicle maintenance. There is no capability to separate the vehicle

maintenance data by specific service stream. However, vehicle maintenance is included in the overall Guelph Transit system performance analysis.

- **Operating revenue to cost ratio:** The relationship between the total revenue generated through operations to the total operating costs related to service delivery.
- **Revenue to cost ratio (R/C):** The relationship between the total revenue (service revenue and recoveries, such as the gas tax) generated through operations to the total costs (operating and capital) related to service delivery.
- **Service statistics:** Statistics to set the context of existing service levels to ensure proportionate comparisons.
 - Hours of service
 - Number of fixed routes
 - Number of routes by headway during off-peak time periods
 - Number of routes by headway during peak time periods
 - Revenue hours
 - Total fleet size
 - Total ridership
 - Total vehicle kilometres

While the fare pricing schedule will be the primary determining factor of when fare increases will occur, the schedule may be modified if metrics are showing that Guelph Transit is off track with municipal comparators.

7. Financial impacts

Staff have identified the financial implications of the Fare Strategy recommendations, including net costs, capital costs, and staff requirements.

7.1 Net cost

The net operating financial impact of the Fare Strategy in 2023 is \$5,200 in additional revenue and between 2024 to 2027 is an increase of \$151,900 for a total of \$157,100 in revenue which is partially offset by an increase in operating costs of \$75,400 resulting in an overall net reduction to the tax support of transit of \$81,700. If approved, these financial impacts would be included in the 2024-2027 multi-year budget. The largest driver of this impact is the Kids Ride Free Program with a net cost of \$155,100 which is made up of a revenue loss of \$117,000 and an operating cost of \$38,100 for a staffing resource.

Table 28. Estimated revenue from the implementation of the Fare Strategy recommendations.

Revenue	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Fare pricing changes	\$5,200	\$10,200	\$52,100	\$121,500	\$51,500
Corporate Pass program	-	\$18,700	\$1,600	\$400	\$500
Bus bay rentals	-	\$3,600	\$600	\$600	\$600
Bus charters	-	\$2,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Kids Ride Free program	-	\$(117,000)	-	-	-
Total	\$5,200	\$(82,000)	\$55,800	\$124,000	\$54,100

Table 29. Estimated expenses from the implementation of the Fare Strategy recommendations.

Expense	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Kids Ride Free program (staff support)	-	\$38,100	-	-	-
Operating impacts from capital	-	\$2,900	\$30,100	\$2,100	\$2,200
Total	-	\$41,000	\$30,100	\$2,100	\$2,200

7.2 Capital investments

The total capital cost to implement the Fare Capping Loyalty program, bank card farebox payments, and self-service reload terminals is \$329,600. These projects would be funded by Transit’s existing capital budget for EFMS enhancements (TC0076).

Table 30. Capital costs of Fare Strategy projects.

Fare Strategy project	Capital cost
Fare capping loyalty program	\$36,300
Bank card tapping farebox payments	\$215,700
Self-service reload terminals	\$77,600
Total	\$329,600

7.3 Staff resources

To properly support the implementation of the recommended new fare programs, payment options, and technologies, the following staff are required.

7.3.1 Fare Media Coordinator

To support the planning and implementation of new fare programs, a Fare Media Coordinator position is required beginning in 2024.

The Fare Media Coordinator will assist in the creation of new fare programs, setting up fare cards, coordinating fare card renewals, and managing and monitoring the success of new fare programs. The coordinator will also perform ongoing audits of customer accounts to ensure accuracy and completeness of information as well as function as a liaison with partner agencies, such as for the Corporate Pass program.

Guelph Transit had previously forecasted the need for this position and has a placeholder for it in 2024. The fare program recommendations from the Fare Strategy support the need for the Fare Media Coordinator position. The request for this position will be referred to the 2024-2027 multi-year budget.

7.3.2 Transit Technologist

To support the implementation and ongoing maintenance of new payment options and new technologies, a Transit Technologist position is required in 2025.

With rapidly changing and emerging technology, Guelph Transit will soon reach a tipping point in which a fulltime staff member is needed to manage all fare technologies. The Transit Technologist will provide technical support for the implementation of debit and credit bank card tapping as fare payment and will keep staff up to date on the latest EFMS technologies. Additionally, the technologist will support the integration of the EFMS with Trapeze software, assist with the implementation of the self-service reload terminals, and provide troubleshooting for technical issues with the EFMS.

Guelph Transit had previously forecasted the need for this position and has a placeholder for it in 2025. The fare payment and program recommendations from the Fare Strategy support the need for the Transit Technologist position. The request for this position will be referred to the 2024-2027 multi-year budget.

7.3.3 Clerical Staff

To support the permanent implementation of the Kids Ride Free program, a clerical staff resource is required in 2024.

If the Kids Ride Free program is made permanent, additional clerical support is required to assist with customer registration and enrollment, setting up fare cards, and providing ongoing customer service support.

An operating budget in the amount of \$38,100, starting in 2024, will be referred to the 2024-2027 multi-year budget for this staffing resource.

8. Looking to the future

Guelph Transit has many exciting projects upcoming that the Fare Strategy will support, including ridership goals of the GTFRAP and the future Guelph Transit Business Plan.

It is important to note that the Fare Strategy document is not set in stone. While implementing the recommendations outlined, Transit will continue to explore ridership incentive programs, further enhance the customer experience, stay relevant in fare system technologies, and continuously engage with our customers.

Beyond the fare programs recommended in the Fare Strategy, staff will continue to explore new fare programs to incentivize ridership and meet the needs of the community.

Additionally, the fare pricing schedule has been determined up to 2031 to align with the changes made in the GTFRAP. Beyond 2031, fare pricing changes will continue to be aligned with future service expansions.

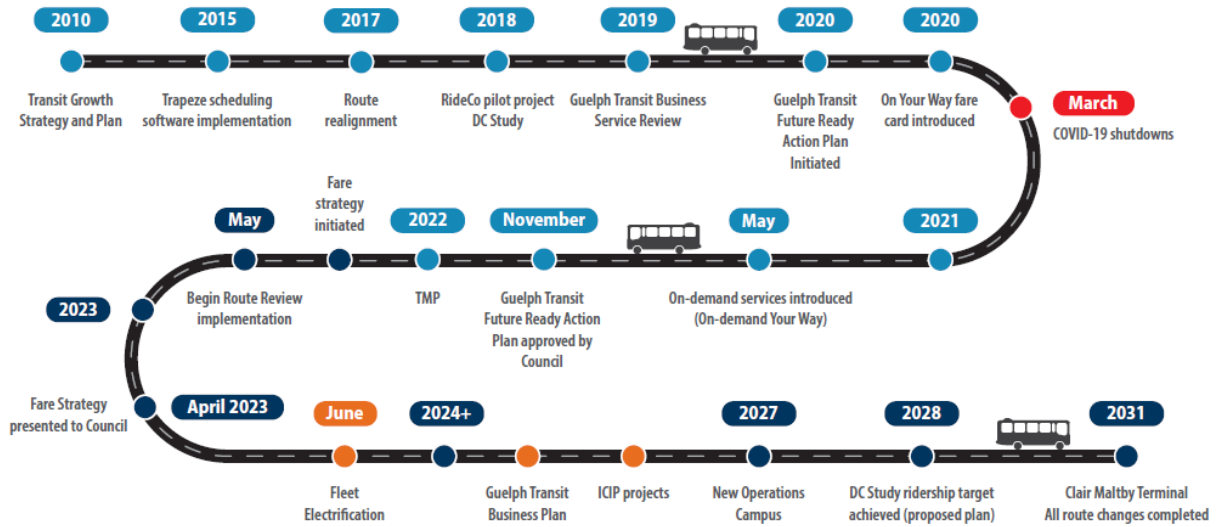


Figure 2. Timeline of Guelph Transit's past and future projects from 2010 to 2031.

9. Next steps

The Guelph Transit Fare Strategy is being provided to the City of Guelph Council for its consideration and approval to move forward with the implementation of the Fare Strategy recommendations.

It is recommended:

1. That the Kids Ride Free program (children aged 12 and under) outlined in Attachment 1, Section 6.3.2 to report PS-2023-102 be made permanent and that the budget impacts as outlined in report PS-2023-102 be included in the 2024-2027 Multi-year Budget.
2. That the Fare Capping Loyalty program, outlined in Attachment 1, Section 6.3.1 to report PS-2023-102, be approved and that the budget impacts as outlined in report PS-2023-102 be included in the 2024-2027 Multi-year Budget.
3. That staff be delegated the authority to proceed with the remaining initiatives recommended in Attachment 1 to report PS-2023-102.

9.1 Fare Strategy recommendations

The following are all 16 recommendations that were developed as a result of the Fare Strategy.

9.1.1 Fare policies

1. OnYourWay fare cards

All fare program users must have an OnYourWay fare card, except for U Pass users. New OnYourWay fare cards cost \$5 to purchase, unless otherwise specified, and replacement OnYourWay fare cards will cost \$5 for all users.

Eligible users of specialty free fare programs receive their first OnYourWay card free of charge. Users must renew their card every five (5) years. The following programs fall under this condition:

- CNIB card
- Veterans card
- Personal Assistant for Leisure Activities (PAL) card
- Retired Transit Operators' card
- Welcome to Guelph card (not eligible for renewal)

Eligible users of specialty discounted fare programs must renew their card annually. The following programs fall under this condition:

- City of Guelph Employee Pass
- Corporate Pass

2. Transfers

The transfer time should always be equal to half of the longest route's cycle time, plus 15 minutes. Therefore, the transfer time should be maintained at 60 minutes.

3. Bus bay rentals

The cost of renting a bus bay at Guelph Central Station will increase to \$770 per month per bus bay effective January 1, 2024, resulting in additional revenue of \$3,600 in 2024. The monthly bus bay rental rate will be reviewed annually and adjusted to keep pace with cost increases in the terminal budget.

4. Bus charters

Bus charter rates will be reviewed and updated annually to match cost increases as outlined in the revenue budgeting policy.

5. Financial performance indicators

A more holistic set of financial performance indicators, including the revenue to cost (R/C) ratio, which considers service levels and aligns with the revenue budgeting policy, should be adopted during the 2024-2027 multi-year budget. An annual review of the financial performance indicators will be conducted and measured against Guelph Transit's municipal comparators.

9.1.2 Fare programs

1. Kids Ride Free program

The Kids Ride Free program (children aged 12 and under) should be made permanent at an annual net budget impact of \$155,100. An operating

budget in the amount of \$38,100 for clerical resources to support the program and a revenue loss of \$117,000 in 2024.

2. Corporate Pass program

Transit staff will develop a new Corporate Pass program with an increase to budgeted revenue of \$18,700 in 2024. The existing program will be phased out and the new program will be launched in 2024.

3. Travel Training program

Transit staff will develop a diverse Travel Training program to meet the needs of various groups, to be launched in 2024. The program will provide free rides to new customers taking part in the program (up to the value of a monthly pass). The program will be developed at no financial impact and will be offered by existing staff.

4. City of Guelph employee pass program

Transit staff will work with Parking and Human Resources staff to enhance the user experience and expand the program so that all City employees are eligible, including casual part-time, co-op students, summer students, and contract employees.

City Hall staff, regardless of employment status, are eligible for a transit pass at 100 per cent discount; all other employees are eligible for a 50 per cent discount. The discounts are taxable benefits and are managed by Human Resources.

Based on historical enrollment in the program, it is assumed the program will continue to operate with minimal financial impact.

5. Fare Capping Loyalty program

The traditional monthly pass program should be transitioned into a pay-as-you-go program, known as a Fare Capping Loyalty program, at a capital cost of \$36,300 funded from the existing capital budget (TC0076) and no operating budget impacts. The fare cap should be set at 34 rides for all fare categories.

If the Fare Capping Loyalty program is not approved, the monthly pass program should be maintained and prices should be increased to the proposed adult and concession fare cap maximum prices of \$95.20 and \$76.50, resulting in additional revenue of \$329,000.

6. TaxiSCRIP program

The maximum number of taxiSCRIP coupon books that can be purchased each month be increased from two to three. The minor additional cost of \$6,300 can be accommodated within the existing operating budget.

9.1.3 Fare structure and pricing

1. Fare structure

The flat fee age-based fare structure will be maintained, and the term concession fares will be adopted to refer to age-based discounts. All users eligible for concession fares will receive the same discount. These users are:

- Kids (if the Kids Ride Free program is not continued)
- Youth
- Post-secondary students
- Seniors

2. Fare pricing (September 2023)

The cash fare will be increased from \$3 to \$3.25, and the debit/credit bank card fare will be introduced at the same rate as cash (\$3.25).

The adult single ride fare will be maintained at \$2.80. The concession single ride fare will be maintained at \$2.25 and will be expanded to include post-secondary students (except for the University of Guelph students).

The adult monthly fare cap should be set to 34 rides, amounting to a maximum of \$95.20 per month. The monthly concession fare cap should also be set to 34 rides, amounting to a maximum of \$76.50 per month.

The day pass will be increased from \$8 to \$8.40, and the weekend pass will be eliminated.

3. Fare pricing methodology

The adult single ride fare price will always be the price that all other fare media prices are based upon, except for cash fare. The single ride fare will be increased by approximately two per cent every year, rounded to the nearest \$0.05 increment. Should costs increase significantly, a greater per-cent increase may be required to support the revenue budget policy.

Concession fares will always be 20 per cent less than an adult single ride fare, rounded to the nearest \$0.05 increment. The price of day passes will always be the equivalent of three adult single ride fares.

The cash fare will be increased in \$0.25 increments every two years. The debit and credit bank card fare will always be the same price as the cash fare.

All changes in prices will be aligned with the revenue budgeting policy.

9.1.4 Payment options

1. Self-service terminals

Three self-service terminals will be purchased for fare card reloading (by debit or credit card), at a cost of \$77,600 funded from the existing capital budget. The terminals will be installed at:

- ServiceGuelph at City Hall
- West End Community Centre
- Victoria Road Recreation Centre

An operating budget in the amount of \$2,900 annually, starting in 2024, be a referred to the 2024-2027 multi-year budget.

2. Debit and credit fare payment

Debit and credit bank cards should be accepted on buses, at a cost of \$215,700 funded from the existing capital budget, pending a supportive business case. An operating budget in the amount of \$30,100 annually, starting in 2025, will be referred to the 2024-2027 multi-year budget.

9.2 Implementation steps

If approved, the goal is to begin implementation of fare pricing changes in September 2023 and implementation of fare programs and payment options in 2024. The estimated timeline is outlined below; however, it may need to change if unforeseen circumstances prevent implementation at the proposed time.

2023 fare system changes include:

- Transferring all programs to OnYourWay fare cards
- Implementing the standardized bus bay rental pricing
- Permanently implementing the Kids Ride Free program
- Updating and expanding the City of Guelph Employee Pass program
- Implementing the Fare Capping Loyalty program
- Updating the taxiSCRIP program
- Implementing changes to fare pricing

2024 fare system changes include:

- Introducing the fare pricing schedule and holistic set of financial performance indicators
- Updating and reintroducing the Corporate Pass program
- Updating and reintroducing the Travel Training program
- Installing the self-service reload terminals

2025 fare system changes include:

- Introducing debit and credit bank card fare payment on buses

Prior to implementation, Staff will need to undertake several tasks in preparation, such as:

- Developing a communications and promotions plan outlining how changes will be communicated to the public.
- Updating the EFMS with fare program and pricing changes.
- Purchasing the self-service terminals, farebox bank card capabilities, and fare capping capabilities.
- Updating internal materials for Transit staff.
- Updating external materials for the website and social media.

9.3 Monitoring process

Once the implementation of the Fare Strategy recommendations has begun, Transit staff will monitor the performance of the fare system changes. The updated list of performance indicators will be used to conduct an annual review, and more frequent reviews as needed, to ensure Guelph Transit is staying on track with municipal comparators and towards meeting City goals.

Staff will continue to collect public feedback to ensure the Fare Strategy stays relevant and changes will be made where needed and where possible.

9.4 Conclusions

With the City of Guelph rapidly growing and changing, a mode share shift is necessary to accommodate the travel needs of a larger population. Paired with the GTFRAP, the Fare Strategy will help build ridership to meet mode share targets set out in the Transportation Master Plan and the DC study. The Fare Strategy supports the City's plans, strategies and policies that aim for transit to be affordable and accessible. The recommendations outline the actions that Guelph Transit should take to modernize the fare system to meet these goals and make transit a more attractive option that meets the needs of current and future customers.

Appendix A: Definitions

Term	Definition
Amalgamated Transit Union 1189 (ATU 1189)	This is the name of the operator’s union and bargaining unit that negotiates with the City of Guelph/ Guelph Transit.
Bus charter or Charter	A bus that has been rented by a customer for transportation to and/or from an event.
Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA)	A national association for urban mobility and both the public and private transit industries in Canada. CUTA collects data annually from transit agencies nationwide to report back with a variety of metrics.
Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)	This is the contract that has been negotiated between the Amalgamated Transit Union 1189 union and City of Guelph (Guelph Transit). The CBA outlines items such as scheduling, overtime, vacation, grievances, and committees, among others.
Electronic Fare Management System (EFMS)	The automated calculation, validation, collection, recording and reporting of passenger fare payments using electronic media for rides on a transit system.
Guelph Transit Future Ready Action Plan (GTFRAP)	A Council-approved plan to deliver a more competitive, convenient, and reliable transit system that meets the community’s needs today and beyond, over the next decade. It moves us closer to meeting goals set out in the City’s Strategic Plan by improving connectivity of the whole transportation system—making it easy for people to travel within city limits.
Mode share / modal share	The number of trips completed by a specific mode of transportation, such as by car, transit, walking, and cycling.
Transportation Master Plan (TMP)	A Council-approved plan that lays out how residents and visitors will move through the city over the next three decades. The TMP is a long-range strategic plan that directs how Guelph’s future transportation system will be built and operated and establishes policies and programs to guide the delivery of transportation infrastructure and services.

Appendix B: Comparator transit agencies

Guelph Transit's Council-approved municipal comparator transit agencies are Barrie Transit, Brantford Transit, Burlington Transit, Kingston Transit, Oakville Transit, St. Catharines Transit Commission, GOVA (Greater Sudbury), Thunder Bay Transit, and Transit Windsor.

1. Fare review and strategy examples

Research was conducted to gather information on the various policies and programs Guelph's municipal comparators have in place.

1.1 Barrie Transit

The following information was gathered via the Barrie Transit website and discussions with Barrie Transit staff.

Fare increases

Through discussions with Barrie Transit, it was discovered that staff have a 12-year fare pricing strategy in place in which there will be a ~1 to 2 per cent increase in pricing for fare media every 4 to 5 years. The fare media prices and schedule for fare increases were determined by referring to municipal comparators' practices and calculating increases to offset inflationary costs.

Fare programs

Kids aged 12 and under ride free

This program was introduced in 2019 with the goal of getting children on the bus at an early age to increase their comfort level with the service and encourage them to become lifelong riders. A fare card is not required to ride; instead, operators track ridership manually on the fare box.

Free transit for seniors (aged 65+) on Thursdays

This program was introduced in 2019 with the goal of increasing seniors' level of comfort using transit so they may take it more often on days when transit is not free. Initially, seniors rode free in the month of June, but community engagement results showed having free transit once a week was preferred.²

CNIB cardholders ride free

Those that have a valid CNIB card can ride free by showing their card when boarding the bus.

² [Global News: Kids 12 and under to ride Barrie Transit for free, seniors to ride at no cost once a week.](#)

GO Transit Co-fare discounts

Those that are connecting to or from a GO train ride free on Barrie Transit by showing a valid PRESTO card or ticket.

Transfers

In 2019, Barrie Transit increased their transfer time from 60 minutes to 75 minutes plus a 15-minute grace period. The intention of increasing the transfer time is so that users can complete a unidirectional trip using one fare.

1.2 Burlington Transit

Burlington Transit's Five-Year Business Plan (2020-2024) includes some fare related strategies, which are outlined below.³

Fare structure and pricing

Burlington Transit uses the smart fare card, PRESTO. Rather than loading rides or a monthly pass, cash is loaded onto the PRESTO card and can be used on any transit system that accepts PRESTO. When users ride with Burlington Transit, they tap their card and are charged the appropriate fare for one ride.

Loyalty program

Burlington Transit has a loyalty system in place to reward frequent riders. Each time a fare is paid using a PRESTO card, it will keep track of the number of trips taken. Once 39 full fare rides per calendar month have been reached, the user will not be charged for the rest of the month.

Fare programs

Free transit for children (ages 12 and under)

In 2019, GO Transit began allowing children aged 12 and under to ride for free. To allow for better system integration and more seamless travel, Burlington Council approved free transit for children aged 12 and under, which began on January 1, 2020. Since children aged 6 to 12 make up less than one percent of Burlington Transit's total ridership, there was not a significant impact to revenue by introducing this program.

Free weekday midday travel for seniors (ages 65 and over)

This program began in 2019 as an 18-month pilot project where seniors travel free on transit from Monday to Friday between 9 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. The pilot program has been extended because senior boardings in the midday increased by 41 per cent between June 2019 and February 2020.

³ [Burlington Transit Business Plan 2020 – 2024.](#)

Since the free fare period must also apply to specialized transit, an increase in use of this service was also observed.

Subsidized Passes for Low-Income Transit (SPLIT) program

In 2019, Council approved a change to the SPLIT program from a 50 per cent fare reduction to a free monthly pass for residents that qualify. 50 per cent of the passes are funded by Halton Region Social Services and the remaining 50 per cent is covered by the City of Burlington.

Employer partnerships

While Burlington Transit does not currently have any employer partnerships in place, the Business Plan recommended exploring partnerships with employers to offer an emergency ride home program, free or discounted passes, employer funded shuttles, and/or on-demand services.

1.3 GOVA Transit

GOVA Transit (Sudbury) recently completed an Affordable Transit Fare Structure report that includes various industry best practices and policies.⁴ The following are the relevant policies and programs outlined in this report.

Fare structure and pricing

Cash fare

Cash fares are used by infrequent customers, so the price should be higher than prepaid fares to reward regular users. Additionally, to improve simplicity, a base cash fare should be set that applies to all transit customers who choose to pay cash. For ease of use, cash fares should minimize the number of coins required, so increasing cash fares less often using \$0.25 increments is advisable.

Concession fares

Target groups that will receive discounts need to be clearly identified. All target groups should receive equal discounts and be categorized under a concession fare to maximize equity across vulnerable groups and simplify the fare structure.

Those that are eligible for concession fares receive an approximately 15 per cent discount from the adult ticket prices and 15 per cent to 35 per cent discount from the adult monthly pass price.

Those categorized under concession fares as per GOVA Transit's policies include:

⁴ [GOVA Transit Affordable Transit Fare Structure.](#)

- “Student” – a person who presents a current and valid student identification card from a high school or post-secondary educational institution.
- “Youth” – a person who is between the ages of 5 and 12.
- “Senior” – a person who is 65 years of age or older.
- “Disability pensioner” – a person who is a recipient of the Ontario Disability Support Program (O.D.S.P), Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (A.C.S.D), Canada Pension Plan Disability (C.P.P.D), Veteran’s Disability Pension or Canadian Institute for the Blind (C.N.I.B).

It should be noted that concession fare discounts do not apply to the base cash fare.

Fare media

Multi-ride cards

It is best practice to create a reward system for frequent transit customers by implementing prepaid fares that are priced 20 per cent below the base cash fare or selling tickets at a rate that easily expresses value. GOVA Transit has implemented this by selling multi-ride cards with evident bulk buying discounts – buy 6 rides for the price of 5 rides.

The purchase of an adult multi-ride card does not require proof of eligibility. The purchase of a concession fare multi-ride card requires proof of eligibility.

Monthly passes

The largest discount should be applied to monthly passes since those purchasing these passes are the most frequent riders. The industry standard is to set the price of a monthly pass at 25-30 times the base cash fare rate. However, to provide affordable structure options rather than revenue generating options, the price should be set at 16-25 times the base cash fare rate.

The terms and conditions of a monthly pass should be clearly defined, including validity, transferability, and eligibility requirements. For example, a GOVA Transit monthly pass is valid for 31 days from the date of activation. Additionally, an adult monthly pass is transferable and does not require a photo identification card; however, a concession fare monthly pass is not transferable and requires a photo identification card.

The cost and requirements of purchasing a photo identification card or smart fare card should also be clearly defined. GOVA Transit charges a \$6 fee for the purchase of a photo identification card. Anyone eligible for concession fares is required to have a photo identification card. Photo identification cards expire every four years.

Vendors selling fare media

GOVA Transit allows retail locations to sell fare media if the retailer has signed a valid vendor agreement. The retailer will then receive a 1 per cent discount on the purchase of fare media for resale.

Fare increases

Since fare increases are required to meet the rising cost of providing transit services, but they can also have a negative impact on ridership, it is best practice to link fare increases with the expansion of service. Transit customers are often less sensitive to fare increases if it means transit service is expanded because they can see what the additional cost is funding.

When increasing fares, cash fares should be increased in \$0.25 increments for ease of use while discounted fare media, like tickets and passes, should be increased in smaller increments each year.

Fare programs

Employer Pass Program

The Employer Pass Program offered by GOVA Transit was recently revised. To participate in the employer pass program, the following conditions must be met and/or agreed to.

- For an employer to qualify, the minimum commitment is to purchase 50 adult monthly passes over 6 consecutive months.
- The passes are provided at a 15 per cent discount from the regular price of an adult monthly pass.
- The passes must be distributed via a payroll deduction program administered by the employer.

Support Person Assistance card

As per the AODA, persons with disabilities requiring assistance can have a support person accompany them on transit for free. Many transit agencies, including GOVA Transit, require the person with a disability to obtain a Support Person Assistance card via an application process to prove eligibility. The card belongs to the person requiring assistance and allows one support person to travel free of charge. Riders that are eligible for specialized transit services do not require a support person assistance card to have a support person accompany them.

Transfers

GOVA Transit offers transfers with the payment of cash or a multi-ride fare card. The transfer time was recently increased from 60 minutes to 90 minutes and direction of travel restrictions were removed. This ensures a rider can complete their trip when transferring between routes, but also acts

as an incentive for users to complete errands without paying a fare for the second time to continue their trip.

Promotion and education

Transit promotion and education is a key piece in supporting ridership growth.

Travel training classes

Travel training, or travel familiarization classes, equip new public transit users with the confidence and knowledge needed to travel more independently. A session would be held with in-class and on-the-road components to accommodate different learning styles and abilities. Examples of target groups for travel training include school age students, people with disabilities, senior citizens, and newcomers to the city. All participants would receive a five-ride card for free as well as a free photo identification fare card that can be loaded with a monthly pass. The use of the five-ride card can be tracked by the farebox to track the success of the program.

The program would be run by a supervisor and supported by transit operators that have been trained as travel training ambassadors. This program requires an annual allocation of \$10,000, with the operating cost of one class being approximately \$300.

Promotional events

GOVA Transit has received requests from many community events looking to partner and promote transit use among people who do not currently take transit. As such, the following partnerships have been identified as eligible for free or discounted transit service:

1. Groups participating in not-for-profit or school board related events will be given free access to transit. The group will be given a letter from the Director of Transit Services that allows the group to board the bus for free.
2. Community events with for-profit organizations will be given the opportunity to cost share via the "Ride the Bus for \$1" initiative. To cover the cost of the fare, the user pays \$1 when boarding the bus, the organization pays \$1, and the City subsidizes the rest of the cost. In exchange for the subsidy provided by the City, the organizer must provide proof that the "Ride the Bus for \$1" initiative has been advertised.

Performance metrics

To ensure the success of new fare policies, it's important to have performance standards in place and to conduct regular program reviews. One method of measuring success is to use farebox data to record different types of fare payments to keep track of passenger classifications and the uptake of new fare programs.

1.4 Kingston Transit

The Kingston Transit 5 Year Business Plan (2017-2021) includes fare strategies for attracting new riders and making transit more affordable.⁵ Relevant strategies have been outlined below.

Fare structure and programs

Kids 14 and under ride free

In the Business Plan, Kingston Transit recommended that the "child" fare category, which allowed children aged 5 and under to ride free, be expanded to include children aged 12 and under. This would be beneficial to adults and caregivers as they would be able to take transit without having to pay the fare for their children to ride with them. However, Council voted to expand the program so that children aged 14 and under ride free.

Expanded "youth" category

The Kingston Transit Business Plan also recommended that the "youth" fare category, which included those aged 13 to 18, be expanded to include passengers between the ages of 13 to 24. The goal of this expansion was to encourage young adults to ride transit by offering the service at a discounted price for longer in hopes that these riders would continue using transit long into adulthood.

As the "child" fare category was extended to be those aged 14 and under, the "youth" fare category was changed to include those aged 15 to 24.

Free transit for high school students

In addition to the discount high school students receive for falling into the "youth" category, registered high school students are eligible to ride Kingston Transit for free. The goal of this program is to expose youth to the benefits of public transit at a young age, so they continue taking transit into adulthood.

Grade 9 students receive an annual bus pass after completing a transit training session at school. Grade 10-12 students will have their passes automatically renewed each year. Grade 12 students that return for an

⁵ [Kingston Transit 5 Year Business Plan 2017-2021](#).

additional year of studies are required to contact Kingston Transit with proof of enrollment to have their bus pass renewed.

From discussions with Kingston Transit, this is an important program because the yellow school bus program in Kingston is limited, meaning many students rely on public transportation to get to and from school. Kingston Transit funds this program using gas tax revenue that has been allotted to the operations budget.

Affordable transit monthly pass

Through the Business Plan, the subsidy for the affordable transit monthly pass was increased from 35 per cent to 50 per cent to ease the financial burden of paying for transit on low-income passengers.

CNIB cardholders' discount

Kingston Transit charges \$0.10 per ride when a valid CNIB card is presented. An annual pass for CNIB cardholders costing \$25 per year was established through the Business Plan. Passengers are required to present their CNIB card when purchasing or renewing the annual pass.

Fare pricing and increases

Under the Business Plan, fare increases were set for every three years to ensure revenues are keeping pace with inflationary cost increases.

The cash fare will be increased by 25 cents every three years to account for inflationary increases of two per cent per year. The prices of multi-ride cards and day passes will also be increased to maintain relative price ratios with the adult cash fare.

The price of an adult monthly pass will be increased every three years to account for inflationary increases of two per cent per year. The price of youth and senior passes will be adjusted as well to maintain the relative price ratio to the adult monthly pass.

Education

Travel training program

Kingston Transit runs travel training sessions for those that are new to transit. Those that participate in a formal travel training session will receive a one-month pass, or the equivalent, as an incentive to participate and start regularly using transit.

1.5 Thunder Bay Transit

Through discussions with Thunder Bay Transit, staff are in the process of developing a new fare strategy. Below are items they will be exploring through their fare strategy.

Fare structure

Alternative fare structures will be explored through the fare strategy, including:

- Free transit rides for certain demographics, such as children 12 and under, low-income residents, and/or seniors.
- Free rides or discounted fares at certain times of the day, week, or month.
- Revamped affordable monthly pass system for low-income residents.

Fare media

New fare media sales locations and requirements will also be explored, including:

- Requiring every fare product retail sales agent to carry and sell the full range of fare products
- Selling high school monthly and semester passes through school boards
- Setting up autorenewal of monthly passes and expanding payment options

1.6 Transit Windsor

Transit Windsor completed a Fare Structure and Strategy Review in 2018 that recommended various changes to the fare system, which are outlined below.⁶

Fare structure and pricing

The fare structure lists all the various fare rates applicable for different transit rider categories. The structure should be based on the price for a single base adult trip and when this price changes, all fare category prices will change.

For example, Transit Windsor offers tickets at a 15 per cent discount on the single ride cash fare. Additionally, passes are offered at a price that is based on the base cash fare multiplied by a specific number of trips. The day pass is offered at three times the price of the single ride cash fare and the adult monthly pass is offered at 32 times the price of the single ride cash fare.

⁶ [Transit Windsor Fare Structure and Strategy Review.](#)

Concession fares

Concession fares are discounts provided to defined groups, such as low-income individuals, people with disabilities, children, students, and/or seniors.

Those that are eligible for concession fares receive an approximately 20 per cent discount from the adult ticket price and 30 per cent to 50 per cent discount from the adult monthly pass price.

Those categorized under concession fares as per Transit Windsor's policies include:

- "Youth" – anyone between 13 and 19 years old. Valid government identification is required to purchase youth classed fare media.
- "Senior" – anyone 60 years and older.

Discounts for University of Windsor students were removed as part of the Fare Review because a U Pass agreement was introduced that offers students a semester pass loaded onto a smart card if their tuition and fees have been paid.

Loyalty programs

The Fare Review recommended that monthly passes be replaced with 30 day rolling passes for enhanced flexibility and convenience for riders. While this was implemented, a 15-day rolling pass was also implemented by Transit Windsor.

Fare media

It was recommended through the Fare Review that paper tickets and passes be replaced with smart cards and mobile ticketing. This was implemented to make it easier to implement the rolling monthly pass as well as to collect better proof of payment and ridership class data. Cash and paper transfers are still accepted.

Fare increases

Transit Windsor has scheduled fare increases of two per cent per year for five years (2019-2023) to keep up with the expected rate of inflation. Each year, the price of all fare products is increased by two per cent, rounded to the nearest \$0.05 increment. The scheduled increases were approved by Council through the Fare Review.

Fare programs

Kids Ride Free program

The Fare Review recommended that the “child” fare category, which encompassed children aged 4 and under at the time, be expanded to allow children aged 12 and under to ride free when accompanied by an adult.

The reasoning behind this change was to encourage parents to take transit instead of driving their kids around as well as to introduce children to transit early on, making them more likely to become lifelong riders.

The financial analysis of this program showed there would be a limited impact on revenue and there would be no need to add service to accommodate the change because children aged 5-12 only accounted for 2.3 per cent of system trips in 2016.

As such, Council approved this recommendation.

Affordable Pass Program

The Affordable Pass Program (APP) allows recipients of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Ontario Works (OW), and individuals with income below the Low-Income Cut-off (LICO) to apply to APP.

To ensure all fare types are available to riders, a single ride ticket price and daily pass option were added to APP. Doing so helps those that qualify for APP reduce the burden of paying for a monthly pass up front. Additionally, it is best practice to make all fare options available to all user groups, so riders have the flexibility to load their fare card with the media that makes the most sense for their needs.

Transfers

Transit Windsor maintained time-based transfers through their Fare Review and kept the transfer time at 120 minutes.

2. Fare Comparison

Table 31. Comparison of 2023 fares and transfer times between municipal comparators.

	Barrie	Brantford	Burlington	Kingston	Oakville	St. Catharines	Sudbury	Thunder Bay	Windsor	Average	Guelph
Cash	\$3.25	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$3.25	\$4.00	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$3.00	\$3.15	\$3.27	\$3.00
Adult ticket	\$2.80	\$2.45	\$2.75	\$2.75	\$3.25	\$2.65	\$2.92	\$2.50	\$2.68	\$2.74	\$2.80
Youth ticket	\$2.45	\$2.45	\$1.90	\$2.25	\$2.55	\$2.20	\$2.50	\$2.50	\$2.10	\$2.33	\$2.25
Senior ticket	\$2.10	\$2.45	\$1.90	\$2.25	\$2.10	\$2.20	\$2.50	\$2.50	\$2.10	\$2.25	\$2.25
Kid ticket	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	\$2.50	Free	Free	N/A	Free
Adult pass	\$89.00	\$73.50	\$104.50	\$80.00	\$136.50	\$85.50	\$88.00	\$80.00	\$101.55	\$90.46	\$80.00
Youth pass	\$68.25	\$55.50	\$72.20	\$59.50	\$87.20	\$63.00	\$75.00	\$55.00	\$70.00	\$65.97	\$68.00
Senior pass	\$53.00	\$55.50	\$72.20	\$59.50	\$65.40	\$63.00	\$56.00	\$55.00	\$51.40	\$57.80	\$68.00
Kid pass	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	\$56.00	Free	Free	N/A	Free
Day Pass	\$9.50	\$9.50	N/A	\$8.25	N/A	\$7.25	\$10.00	N/A	\$9.60	\$8.87	\$8.00
Transfer time (mins)	75	60	120	60	120	120	90	90	120	86	60

3. Survey

A 14-question survey was sent to comparators in March 2022 to assist with the development of Guelph Transit’s Fare Strategy. Responses were received from eight of nine comparators. The questions and responses are detailed in the below tables.

Table 32. What triggers a fare increase at your transit agency?

Transit agency	Question 1 response
Barrie Transit	Fare Strategy to offset inflationary costs.
Brantford Transit	No set triggers.
Burlington Transit	Increases to service levels and frequency.
Kingston Transit	Business Plan scheduled increases.
Oakville Transit	Annual increases to cover increasing costs.
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	Annual service review triggered by user fee bylaws. Increases based on service level increases and cost efficiency.
Thunder Bay Transit	Triggered by Fare Strategy.
Transit Windsor	Fare Structure Review scheduled annual increases.

Table 33. When was your agency’s last fare increase? What was the percentage of your agency's last fare increase?

Transit agency	Question 2a response	Question 2b response
Barrie Transit	2019	Cash fare increased by \$0.25 (8.3%)
Brantford Transit	2017	Cash fare increased by \$0.25 (9.1%)
Burlington Transit	2015	Cash fare increased by \$0.25 (8%); \$0.05 increase on PRESTO e-ticket fares
Kingston Transit	2020	Monthly pass increased by \$4 (5.25%); all other increases based on monthly pass
Oakville Transit	2018 (cash); 2022 (PRESTO)	Cash fare increased by \$0.25 (6.67%); \$0.05 annual increases to PRESTO e-tickets (1.98%)
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	2019	Cash fare increased by \$0.20 (6.1%); ticket price increased by \$0.32 (12%)
Thunder Bay Transit	2020	Cash fare increased by \$0.25 (9.1%); ticket price increased \$0.30 (13.7%)

Transit agency	Question 2a response	Question 2b response
Transit Windsor	2022	Cash and ticket fare increased by \$0.05 (2%); monthly pass increased by ~\$2 (2%)

Table 34. Do you do small annual fare increases (i.e., 1-2%) or larger, infrequent increases (i.e., 5% every 5 years)?

Transit agency	Question 3 response
Barrie Transit	Cash: \$0.25 increase every 4 years Monthly pass: \$0.50-\$1 increases annually
Brantford Transit	Neither
Burlington Transit	Neither
Kingston Transit	Larger increases every 3 years
Oakville Transit	Small annual increases
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	Neither
Thunder Bay Transit	Cash: \$0.25 every 5 years Other fare media: small annual increases
Transit Windsor	2% annually for all fare media

Table 35. What fare elasticity do you use in your revenue and ridership projects?

Transit agency	Question 4 response
Barrie Transit	For every 5% increase in price, ridership will decrease by 1%
Brantford Transit	N/A
Burlington Transit	Industry standards
Kingston Transit	N/A
Oakville Transit	N/A
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	N/A
Thunder Bay Transit	For every 3% increase in price, ridership will decrease by 1%
Transit Windsor	N/A

Table 36. What was the breakdown of your funding sources, pre-covid, by percent?

Transit agency	Question 5 response
Barrie Transit	61% municipal tax, 20% fares, 7% U Pass, 10% Provincial Gas Tax, 2% advertising
Brantford Transit	-
Burlington Transit	38% municipal tax, 34% fares, 24% provincial contribution/gas tax, 3% advertising
Kingston Transit	-
Oakville Transit	67% tax, 30% fare box, 3% other (advertising, charters)
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	Taxes, fares, U Pass agreement, advertising, SRA, gas tax, and ICIP
Thunder Bay Transit	59% municipal contribution, 35% fares (75% regular fares, 25% U Pass), 4% gas tax, 1% advertising/charters, 1% provincial grants
Transit Windsor	~50% farebox, ~50% municipal funding, small percentage is U pass and advertising

Table 37. Do you have a Fare Coordinator, or an employee with a similar title, which is responsible for everything fare related?

Transit agency	Question 6 response
Barrie Transit	Manager of Business Services
Brantford Transit	Transit Supervisor and Transit Manager
Burlington Transit	Business Services group
Kingston Transit	Secretary and IT Project Manager
Oakville Transit	No
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	No
Thunder Bay Transit	Supervisor, Customer Care/Admin, and the Manager of Transit
Transit Windsor	Executive Director of Transit and the Sales and Marketing manager

Table 38. What payment options do you offer?

Transit agency	Question 7 response
Barrie Transit	Cash and paper fare media.

Transit agency	Question 7 response
Brantford Transit	Cash, smart fare card, and transfers.
Burlington Transit	Cash fare and PRESTO fare cards. Paper tickets for non-profits only.
Kingston Transit	Smart card, tickets, cash, and mobile app.
Oakville Transit	Payment by cash, PRESTO e-tickets, PRESTO card. Paper tickets and passes for social service agencies only.
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	Cash and ride cards.
Thunder Bay Transit	Cash fares, paper tickets, annual senior bus passes and monthly passes.
Transit Windsor	Smart cards, paper tickets, and cash.

Table 39. Where/how can customers purchase transit fare media?

Transit agency	Question 8 response
Barrie Transit	Bus terminal, Service Barrie, recreation centres, and Georgian College.
Brantford Transit	Transit terminal.
Burlington Transit	Burlington Transit terminal. PRESTO card users can purchase/load at any GO transit station, Shoppers Drug Mart, or online.
Kingston Transit	Various City and retail outlets
Oakville Transit	PRESTO cards - online, GO Stations, and transit facility. Paper tickets and paper passes only available through transit office.
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	Transit kiosks, various corner stores, and City facilities.
Thunder Bay Transit	Main Transit office and 25 retail outlets around town.
Transit Windsor	Transit Terminals, contracted vendors, and community care centers.

Table 40. Do you use a fixed fare structure model where the price of youth, senior, and/or affordable monthly passes always costs the same percentage of the adult monthly pass?

Transit agency	Question 9 response
Barrie Transit	Discounted fares are increased in a similar proportion but are not a fixed discount from the adult fare.
Brantford Transit	No fixed fare model.

Transit agency	Question 9 response
Burlington Transit	No fixed fare model - increases can be 5 to 25 cents.
Kingston Transit	Generally, yes.
Oakville Transit	-
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	No fixed fare model.
Thunder Bay Transit	Generally, yes.
Transit Windsor	Generally, yes.

Table 41. What ridership incentive programs do you have?

Transit agency	Question 10 response
Barrie Transit	U Pass (Georgian College), children 12 and under ride free, and seniors ride free on Thursdays.
Brantford Transit	U Pass and sponsored free rides to events.
Burlington Transit	Loyalty program, in which after the 38th transit ride, transit is free for the rest of the month, and seniors ride free midday weekdays.
Kingston Transit	High school students, ODSP clients, Ontario Works clients, and children 14 and under ride at no cost. Post-secondary student reduced term pass/U pass. Employee Pass Program with discounted monthly pass.
Oakville Transit	Seniors ride free on Mondays and Youth Freedom Pass.
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	U Pass and employer pass.
Thunder Bay Transit	U Pass, ticket to ride program for local events/festivals, school/daycare travel program, and First Nation Secondary School Pass.
Transit Windsor	U Pass, Corporate Valu program – 15% discount, Affordable Pass – based on LICO, International Fireworks sponsorship providing free rides to the downtown area, and Frequent Rider Contest.

Table 42. If kids 12 and under ride free on your transit system, how do you track their usage? Have you seen an increase in ridership in this age group since introducing the free fare program?

Transit agency	Question 11 response
Barrie Transit	Operators track trips through button on fare box; yes, have seen an increase in ridership.

Transit agency	Question 11 response
Brantford Transit	Drivers press button on fare box.
Burlington Transit	Recommended to obtain PRESTO card. If a child does not have a PRESTO card, driver tracks through button on fare box. Yes, ridership has increased for this age group.
Kingston Transit	14 and under ride for free. No pass required. Trips tracked manually on farebox by bus operator. Yes, have seen an increase in adult ridership linked to 14 and under ride for free.
Oakville Transit	Yes, kids 12 and under ride free. We encourage everyone to use a PRESTO card.
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	Children 5 and under ride free. Press button on fare box to track.
Thunder Bay Transit	Children 12 and under ride free to begin April 1, 2022. Press button on fare box to track.
Transit Windsor	Track using fare box override button. Difficult to determine ridership impacts because introduced program during pandemic.

Table 43. Do you have a municipal Corporate Pass program for City employees? If so, what is the rate?

Transit agency	Question 12 response
Barrie Transit	Yes, 30% discount from adult fare.
Brantford Transit	No
Burlington Transit	City staff offered transit passes in lieu of parking passes.
Kingston Transit	City staff eligible for employer pass program rate.
Oakville Transit	Smart Commute program - Town of Oakville employees have access to transit passes at a 50% discount.
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	No, falls under employer pass.
Thunder Bay Transit	No. Free transit for current/retired operators and spouses.
Transit Windsor	The Corporate Valu program has been extended to City employees at a 15% discount.

Table 44. What is the current level of service you are offering, and are these pre-covid levels? If not, what was your pre-covid service vs. now?

Transit agency	Question 13 response
Barrie Transit	-
Brantford Transit	Currently: Half hour service – 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. Hourly night service at 8 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday. Pre-covid: half hour service Monday-Saturday, hourly night service at 9 p.m.
Burlington Transit	Our current (modified) service levels are mainly 30- and 60-min frequency, with some peak only service and 15 min frequency on Route 1.
Kingston Transit	About 85% of pre-COVID service.
Oakville Transit	Approximately 75% of our pre-COVID service level.
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	At 90% of pre-COVID service.
Thunder Bay Transit	Currently we are at 92% of pre-pandemic levels.
Transit Windsor	“Saturday” level of service which is about 70% of regular service.

Table 45. What is your transfer time? Has it always been this length? What is your reasoning for choosing this length of time? Do you allow bidirectional travel with a transfer?

Transit agency	Question 14 response
Barrie Transit	75 minutes plus a 15-minute grace period. Transfer time increased 15 minutes in 2019 as per the fare strategy. Intent is for one complete trip (not bidirectional).
Brantford Transit	Transfer time is one hour. It has been this length since at least 2016. Yes, bidirectional travel is allowed.
Burlington Transit	We follow and use the PRESTO transfer window which is 2 hours. Riders can transfer on any bus during that 2-hour transfer window.
Kingston Transit	60 minutes in a single direction.
Oakville Transit	We use a two-hour transfer window that permits travel in any direction during the 2-hour time frame. It has been this length for over 15 years.
GOVA (Greater Sudbury)	Transfers used to be 30 minutes, but we have now moved to a 90-minute transfer allowing people a little more time.

Transit agency	Question 14 response
Thunder Bay Transit	Currently, the transfer time is 60 minutes and is changing to 90 minutes effective April 1, 2022. Transfers allow for bidirectional travel.
Transit Windsor	Transfer times are 2 hours any direction.

Appendix C: Case studies and best practices

1. Case studies

1.1 TransLink, Metro Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

TransLink services the Metro Vancouver area with trains, buses, and ferries. TransLink completed a public transit Fare Review in 2018 that made recommendations for changes to the fare system⁷. Using information collected on the website and through the Fare Review report, the following examples from the fare system have been reviewed and considered.⁸

1.1.1 Fare structure

Although the Fare Review recommended switching to a distance-based method of fare pricing, TransLink still uses flat fares for conventional and specialized bus transit service. Additionally, for rapid transit, train, and boat transit service, a zone-based fare system is used where different prices are applied when travelling within or between zones.

⁷ [TransLink: Fares.](#)

⁸ [TransLink Fare Review: Final Recommendations.](#)



Figure 3. Map of TransLink fare zones posted online.

1.1.2 Fare pricing

TransLink increases fares annually to keep up with inflation and maintain the current transit while working towards achieving long-term financial sustainability. In 2022, all transit fares were increased by 2.3 per cent.⁹

Concession fares

Passengers who are eligible for concession fare discounts may pay with cash, stored value on a fare card, or a monthly pass on a fare card.

Those categorized under concession fares as per TransLink’s policies include:

- “Children” – a person aged 12 and under.
- “Youth” – a person aged 13 to 18. Valid photo ID to prove age is required.
- “Senior” – a person aged 65 years and older. Valid photo ID to prove age is required.
- HandyCard holders – a person who cannot use conventional transit without assistance who has been given a photo identification card (HandyCard) allowing them to ride conventional transit at concession fare prices with an attendant who rides for free.

⁹ [TransLink: Annual fare change begins July 1.](#)

Transfers

The Fare Review recommended keeping the existing transfer time of 90 minutes, which has been maintained. Transfers are automatically applied when a card or ticket is first tapped when boarding.

1.1.3 Fare programs

Children 12 and under ride free

As of September 1, 2021, children aged 12 and under can ride TransLink transit services for free. This change is aimed at making transit more affordable for families in Metro Vancouver.

Children must be accompanied by a fare paying passenger possessing proof of payment to ride for free on train and boat transit service; however, children may ride free unaccompanied on bus transit. Additionally, a maximum of four children can travel free per paying passenger.

Fare donation program

Transit users may donate their old fare cards back to TransLink to have the remaining value converted into transit passes to help children, families, and seniors at United Way.

TransLink for Organizations

TransLink for Organizations is a program that Metro Vancouver businesses can enroll in to offer discounted transit services to their employees. Employers can choose whether to offer stored value or monthly passes to their employees and can choose how much of the cost they would like to offset.

For stored value, employers can choose to offset between \$10 and \$175 per month, and for a monthly pass, employers can choose to offset between 10 per cent to 100 per cent per month. The employees are responsible for paying the remainder of the cost, which must be paid through automatic payroll deductions.

As there is not a subsidy offered by TransLink for this program, there is no minimum number of employees required to enroll to make the employer eligible.

Transit Friendly Employer Certification

Employers that participate in the TransLink for Organizations program may be eligible for the Transit Friendly Employer Certification.

The certification program recognizes employers that are working towards a more sustainable future by making travel for their employees easier, more affordable, and more climate friendly.

The minimum requirements for an employer to qualify for certification is as follows:

- A transit subsidy of at least 50 per cent must be provided
- Employers with 200+ employees must enroll at least 10 per cent of staff in the program for a minimum of six months to qualify
- Employers with less than 200 employees must enroll at least 25 per cent of staff to the program with no minimum time commitment

Employers that have qualified for the certification program can market themselves with the official Transit-Friendly Employer stamp and will receive free advertisements through TransLink's communication channels for leading the way to a more sustainable future.

1.1.4 Fare payment options

The following payment options are available on all TransLink transit services:

- Cash – coins and bills inserted in the farebox when boarding
- Ticket – purchased from a ticket vending machine and tapped on the farebox when boarding
- Fare card – a reusable fare card that can be preloaded with stored value, a day pass, a monthly pass, and/or a U Pass and tapped on the farebox when boarding
- Debit card – tapped on the farebox when boarding
- Credit card – tapped on the fare box when boarding
- Transfer – re-tapping the card that was first tapped on the farebox within the 90-minute transfer time.

1.2 Public Transport Council, Singapore

The Public Transport Council (PTC) of Singapore oversees all methods of public transportation, including transit, within the country. In terms of transit, the PTC makes decisions on fare structure and pricing, which have been discussed below.¹⁰

1.2.1 Fare structure

The PTC uses a distance-based fare structure in which riders are charged based on how many kilometres they are travelling. They are also charged based on what kind of transit they are using – trunk bus route, feeder bus route, express bus route, metro rail, or light rail transit.

¹⁰ [Public Transport Council.](#)

1.2.2 Fare pricing

Fare incentives

To help with weekday morning crowding on transit, the PTC introduced pre-peak fare discounts to encourage more commuters to travel earlier. Users that tap their card before 7:45 a.m. on weekdays automatically receive a 50-cent discount on their fare for that trip.

Fare increases

The PTC has a Fare Regulation Framework in place that guides the annual fare review. It uses a complex fare formula that considers a variety of factors when making decisions on how much the fares can be adjusted.

The formula is:

$$\text{Maximum Fare Adjustment} = 0.5\text{cCPI} + 0.4\text{WI} + 0.1\text{EI} - 0.1\% + \text{NCF}$$

Where:

- cCPI = the change in Core Consumer Price Index
- WI = the change of Wage Index in average monthly earnings over the preceding year
- EI = Energy Index, which is a composite of cost changes in electricity and diesel
- 0.1% = Productivity Extraction factor set for 2018 to 2022
- NCF = Network Capacity Factor, which is the capacity relative to passenger demand for the entire public transport system

The result of the fare review tends to be an increase of several cents to fares. For example, the 2022 fare review resulted in a 4-cent increase to adult fares on trips that are greater than or equal to 8.2 kilometres in distance and a 5-cent increase for trips that are greater than 8.2 kilometres in distance as well as a 1 cent increase to all concession fares.¹¹

1.3 Transport for New South Wales, Australia

Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) is the transportation agency that services Sydney and surrounding areas. TfNSW has various public transit options, including trains, the metro, buses, light rail, and ferries. Examples of TfNSW's fare structure and programs have been outlined in the following.¹²

¹¹ [Public Transport Council: Fare Review Exercise 2022.](#)

¹² [Transport for New South Wales: Fares and payments.](#)

1.3.1 Fare structure

TfNSW uses a hybrid approach of distance-based and time-based fares. The price a user pays will depend on the mode of transit they are using, the distance they are travelling, and the time of day they are travelling. For example, Table 46 below shows the fare someone with an adult fare card, called an Opal card, would pay at different times of the day and travelling different distances. The fare is determined by the user tapping onto the bus at the beginning of their trip and tapping when they get off the bus. If a user does not tap off, they will be charged the maximum fare.

Table 46. Adult bus fares using an Opal fare card.

Distance	On-peak hours	Off-peak hours
0-3 km	\$3.20	\$2.24
3-8 km	\$3.79	\$2.65
8+ km	\$4.87	\$3.40

1.3.2 Fare pricing

TfNSW increases Opal card fares annually and generally aligns fare increases with per cent increase recommendations by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal. In 2022, the fares were increased by an average of 3 per cent.¹³

Concession fares

TfNSW has standard pricing for adult fares and determines the concession fare pricing based on the fare category of the customer. Concession fares are available for eligible customers.

Those categorized under concession fares as per TfNSW's policies include:

- Children and youth
 - Children aged 3 years and under travel free.
 - Children aged 4 to 15 years are entitled to concession fares.
 - Fulltime students aged 16 years and older may pay concession fares if they are holding a Transport Concession Entitlement card. This card is issued for free to students that have shown proof of fulltime enrollment.
- School students
 - Some students are eligible for free or subsidized travel to and from school, depending on where they live.

¹³ [Transport for New South Wales: Annual Opal price changes on 4 July 2022.](#)

- Post-secondary students may also apply for a Transport Concession Entitlement card. This card is issued for free to students that have shown proof of fulltime enrollment and allows the student to pay concession fares.
- Seniors
 - Customers with a Seniors Card issued by any Australian state or territory are entitled to concession fares.
 - To be eligible for a NSW Seniors Card, the applicant must be a permanent resident of NSW aged 60 or over and doing no more than an average of 20 hours of paid work a week, across a 12-month period.
- Pensioners
 - Customers with a Pensioner Concession Card issued by any Australian state or territory are entitled to concession fares. Those eligible for this card will automatically receive one from the Department of Human Service or Department of Veterans' Affairs.
- Centrelink customers
 - Customers who are receiving income support from Centrelink are eligible for a Transport Concession Entitlement card. This card is issued for free to those that have met the eligibility requirements and allows the user to pay concession fares.
- Asylum seekers
 - Customers who are permanently residing in NSW and are receiving aid from an asylum seeker support agency are eligible for a Transport Concession Entitlement card. This card is issued for free to those that have met the eligibility requirements and allows the user to pay concession fares.
- Apprentices or trainees
 - Customers who are registered with Training Services NSW and in an active apprenticeship are eligible for a Transport Concession Entitlement card. This card is issued for free to those that have met the eligibility requirements and allows the user to pay concession fares.
- People with disabilities
 - Customers that have severe vision impairment can apply for a Vision Impaired Person's Pass that allows free travel on the transit system.
 - Customers who require an attendant's support to travel can apply for a Companion Card to allow their support person to travel for free with them.

- Veterans
 - Some veterans with a disability, widows and widowers, and dependent children who lost a parent are entitled to concession or free travel.
 - Eligible customers must apply for a Transport Concession Entitlement card or Free Pass.

1.3.3 Fare programs

In addition to the hybrid fare structure approach that TfNSW employs, they have a fare capping loyalty program that offers daily, weekly, and weekend fare caps. The fare caps are automatically applied when a customer uses an Opal fare card, and the caps are set at different prices for different concession fare groups

Table 47. Fare capping daily, weekend, and weekly maximums by fare category.

Fare Category	Weekday Cap	Weekend/Holidays Cap	Weekly Cap
Adult (18+)	\$16.30	\$8.15	\$50
Child (4-17, full time school)	\$8.10	\$4.05	\$25
Senior/Pensioner	\$2.50	\$2.50	\$17.50

1.4 Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas, USA

The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) is a bi-state public transit agency that operates in metropolitan Kansas City, servicing residents located in the Missouri and Kansas parts of Kansas City.¹⁴ Of particular interest is the fare free system that KCATA operates, which is discussed below.

1.4.1 Fare structure

KCATA operates using a unique fare structure as all passengers ride the transit system fare free.

An ordinance was unanimously passed by Council to explore fare free transit options. KCATA began implementing the fare free system slowly by first eliminating fares for veterans, then high school students, then clients of social services, prior to eliminating fares for everyone.

¹⁴ [Kansas City Area Transportation Authority.](#)

The cost to eliminate fares for everyone is about \$8 million per year. The City's budget allots \$4.8 million for the initiative and the remaining costs are covered by private sector partners and private donations.

As most of KCATA's budget is covered by a new tax measure that generates \$16 to \$20 million annually in new revenue, the loss of fares only erased approximately 8 per cent of the agency's revenue. Even so, non-essential management activities needed to be cancelled to keep the program operational.¹⁵

To help ensure that the system can remain fare free, KCATA has set up a website, zerofarekc.com, that allows individuals and corporations to donate money towards the initiative.

1.5 Edmonton Transit Service, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) operates light rail and bus public transit in the City of Edmonton. In 2017, Edmonton's Transit Strategy was completed, which guides the direction of the transit system, including the fare system.¹⁶ Examples from the Transit Strategy and ETS website have been gathered and outlined below.

1.5.1 Fare structure

Much like Guelph Transit, the ETS uses a flat fee fare structure, meaning no matter where a customer is travelling, they will always pay the same fare for one trip. Additionally, the fare system is age-based, meaning discounts are offered based on age.

1.5.2 Fare pricing

Edmonton Council previously approved a user fee schedule that would see ETS cash fares increase by \$0.25 and tickets and monthly passes increase by 2 per cent annually from 2019 to 2022. However, Council decided against fare increases in 2021 and 2022 due to COVID-19 and wanting to wait until the new Arc Card smart fare system was operational.¹⁷

Fare categories

ETS has four main fare categories, which are as follows:

- "Children" – anyone aged 12 years old and under.
- "Youth" – anyone aged 13 to 24 years old.
- "Adult" – anyone aged 25 to 64 years old.

¹⁵ [Smart Cities Dive: Who will pay for Kansas City, MO's free transit?](#)

¹⁶ [Edmonton's Transit Strategy.](#)

¹⁷ [Global News: Council delays cash fare increase for Edmonton transit users.](#)

- “Senior” – anyone aged 65 years and older.

Transfers

The payment of a proper fare allows users to obtain a transfer that will be valid for 90 minutes.

1.5.3 Fare programs

Fare Capping

Currently, ETS offers daily and monthly fare capping for those paying adult fares and using the new Arc fare card. The daily cap is equivalent in value to a day pass and the monthly cap is equivalent in value to the monthly pass.

Table 48. Adult fare types and prices.

Fare type	Fare price
Cash	\$3.50
E-ticket	\$2.75
Daily fare cap maximum	\$10.25
Day Pass	\$10.25
Monthly fare cap maximum	\$100
Monthly pass	\$100

Fare capping will be available for the remaining fare categories by the end of 2023 when the Arc fare card is made available to all fare categories.

Children 12 and Under Ride Free program

Children under 12 ride free when accompanied by a fare-paying customer (youth, adult, senior). There is no limit to the number of children that can ride free with a fare-paying customer. For example, a teacher could bring an entire class; however, it is expected that the customer will be able to supervise all accompanied children properly.

Seniors’ Annual Pass

Annual passes are available to seniors when an application is submitted that provides proof of age. They are valid from April 1 to March 31 of the following year.

The cost of the annual pass is determined by income as low-income seniors are eligible for a free or discounted pass.

Table 49. Cost and eligibility requirements for the Seniors' Annual Pass.

Annual pass type	Income level	Cost to purchase
Regular	Above \$30,265	\$385

Annual pass type	Income level	Cost to purchase
Low income	Between \$27,514 and \$30,265	\$139
Low income	Below \$27,514	\$0

ETS@Work program

In partnership with Edmonton employers, the ETS@Work program provides employees with a monthly discount of up to 24 per cent off the cost of a regular adult monthly pass, plus further eligibility for a federal tax credit.

The employer must agree to purchase a minimum of 10 passes a month. The employer is required to match the ETS discount of 12 per cent off the regular adult monthly pass fare, thus, providing their employees with a total discount of about 24 per cent. Employers are welcome to increase their portion of the discount at their own discretion. Employers are responsible for contracting with participating employees and administering the payroll deductions.

CNIB Riders

Customers who are visually impaired and who possess a CNIB ID card can use that card as a transit pass on all ETS services including routes providing service outside the City of Edmonton. The CNIB card must be shown to the bus operator upon boarding.

1.6 GO Transit, Ontario, Canada

GO Transit is operated by the provincial transportation authority, Metrolinx, and is the regional public transit service for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area of Ontario.

1.6.1 Fare structure

GO Transit uses a distance-based and age-based fare structure in which a user will pay a fare based on their age and how far they have travelled. To properly charge fares, users must purchase a ticket in advance, or they must tap their PRESTO fare card when boarding and alighting.

1.6.2 Fare programs

GO Loyalty Discount Program

Metrolinx owns and operates PRESTO, a contactless smart card automated fare collection system, which is used on GO Transit and other municipal Ontarian transit agencies. PRESTO allows for the implementation of fare capping by daily, weekly, or monthly values.

On GO Transit, monthly fare capping is employed for users with a PRESTO card where after paying for 40 trips within a calendar month, users will ride

free for the rest of that month. For trips 1 to 35, different discounts are applied for different fare categories, as outlined in Table 50.¹⁸

Table 50. Percent discount applied to the single ride adult ticket fare for each fare category and trip number within a month.

Number of trips	Youth	Adult	Senior
1 through 35	40%	15.7%	55%
36 through 40	95%	88.3%	55%
41 and more	100%	100%	100%

Similarly, Brampton Transit employs PRESTO and introduced weekly fare capping in July 2020. If a customer uses their PRESTO card to pay for 12 trips within a one-week period (Monday to Sunday), then every additional trip within that week will be free.¹⁹

1.6.3 Fare payment options

GO Transit recently introduced the ability for a user to tap on and off with a credit card, including digital credit cards on smartphones and watches. Users who tap a credit card will also be able to participate in the GO Loyalty Discount Program and receive the same discounts that those using a PRESTO card would get. However, users must continuously tap using the same method (i.e., physical card or digital card) as the trips purchased using each method are captured separately.²⁰

1.7 Payment option best practices

From the Transit Leadership Summit white paper²¹ on fare collection and policy, providing a wide range of fare payment options is not only beneficial to the customer experience but is in the best interest of transit agencies wanting to grow ridership.

More advanced fare technology, such as contactless smart cards and mobile NFC payments, makes it easier to manage demand and address equity concerns through differentiated fares. These types of payment options can contribute to increased ridership, and, thus, increased revenue, due to the convenience provided. Having the option for pre-payment and auto-loading of smart cards means passenger boarding will be quicker and the bus dwells for shorter periods of time, resulting in faster bus routes.

¹⁸ [GO Transit: Fare Discounts with PRESTO.](#)

¹⁹ [Brampton Transit: Bus Fares.](#)

²⁰ [GO Transit: Tap On and Off With a Credit Card on GO.](#)

²¹ [Transit Leadership Summit: Fare Collection and Fare Policy.](#)

The attitude of existing and potential customers towards transit is largely shaped by the features offered, such as convenient payment options, which can change overall perception and mode choice.

1.7.1 Interac payment system

Adding the option to pay fares by tapping a debit card or smart phone are excellent options for improving convenience for customers. These payment options have been successfully implemented in many transit agencies around the world, such as in London, England.

Transport for London (TfL) implemented fare payment by contactless card in 2012. As many customers were used to tapping their bank cards to make payments there was great uptake. By 2019, one in eight trips on TfL was being paid for with a mobile wallet app. TfL has also implemented daily fare capping for customers using a contactless card so that they will never pay more than that of a day pass.

Since approximately 94 per cent of Canadians have an Interac debit card and over half of day-to-day purchases in Canada are already made by tap, it is believed there is great potential for implementing contactless card payment on public transit.²²

1.7.2 Maintaining cash fares

While moving to automated payment systems may be more convenient for many customers, the complete elimination of the option to pay cash fares is inequitable to those who may not have another payment option.

It is estimated that ten per cent of American adults do not have a bank account or credit card and do not have a smart phone. Additionally, not everyone can use, or feels comfortable using, a mobile app or smart card with automatic reloading features. Having the ability to pay cash is also a convenient option for infrequent riders who do not have a smart fare card or mobile app.

The Portland State University Transportation Research and Education Center conducted research on the consequences associated with removing cash fare payments. Their conclusions found that, generally, low-income individuals had less access to smartphones, the internet, and banking, meaning these individuals also tended to have lower access to automated fare systems. As such, while society is moving away from cash, eliminating this option entirely is not recommended.²³

²² [Interac: Open-loop payment systems for transit.](#)

²³ [Portland State University: Eliminating cash options for public transit fares.](#)

2. Evaluation of viability

Information collected on practices and programs of Guelph’s municipal comparators and other case studies from around the world were examined for the applicability to the context of Guelph and for financial feasibility. Ratings and reasoning have been outlined in the tables below.

Table 51. Fare program contextual applicability and financial feasibility.

Fare program	Contextually applicable?	Financially feasible?	Reasoning
Kids aged 12 and under ride free	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing pilot successful • Limited revenue impact • Encourages lifelong riders
Seniors ride free programs (midday; one day a week)	Yes	Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire from community engagement • Likely significant revenue loss • Would need to further explore options to determine viability
Seniors annual pass	Yes	Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was requested in community engagement • Revenue loss expected • Further research is required to determine viability
CNIB cardholders ride free	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing program • Limited revenue impact
Concession fares for persons with disabilities and/or low-income	Yes	Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely higher revenue loss • Affordable Bus Pass program covers many of these users

Fare program	Contextually applicable?	Financially feasible?	Reasoning
Daily, weekly, and/or monthly fare capping	Yes	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fare equity • Simplify fare media options
Employer pass program	Yes	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing program could be expanded • Reward frequent riders • Build relationships with local businesses

Table 52. Fare structure contextual applicability and financial feasibility.

Fare structure	Contextually applicable?	Financially feasible?	Reasoning
Flat fare	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing fare structure • Best for small and medium-sized transit agencies • Keeps system simple
Distance-based fares	No	Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best for large transit agencies • Distance travelled would not be far enough for this system to work well • Would complicate the system
Zone-based fares	No	Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best for large transit agencies • No clear zones in Guelph • Would complicate the system

Fare structure	Contextually applicable?	Financially feasible?	Reasoning
Time-based fares	Possibly	Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best for large transit agencies • Offers discounted fares during off-peak periods – would encourage ridership • Would complicate the system
Fare free	Possibly	Highly unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would result in significant revenue loss • Best suited for transit agencies that are heavily subsidized by private sector
Age-based fares	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing fare system • Favoured in community engagement
Income-based fares	Yes	Highly likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many agencies moving towards this for fare equity • Guelph has unique Affordable Bus Pass program already that supports this • Not favoured by community engagement

Table 53. Fare pricing methodology contextual applicability and financial feasibility.

Pricing methodology	Contextually applicable?	Financially feasible?	Reasoning
Regular interval increases	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides consistency for customers in timing and pricing • Ensures growing costs are covered

Pricing methodology	Contextually applicable?	Financially feasible?	Reasoning
Inflationary increases	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely consistent increases, although not always • Ensures growing costs are covered
Fare regulation formula	No	Possibly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better suited for large transit agencies • Difficult to obtain necessary data to successfully conduct

Table 54. Fare payment options contextual applicability and financial feasibility.

Payment options	Contextually applicable?	Financially feasible?	Reasoning
Debit/credit cards	Yes	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular form of payment • Would encourage infrequent riders to ride more often
Eliminate cash fare	No	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash is still an important option for visitors and those that take transit • Would eliminate labour hours needed to count cash • Just replaced fareboxes
Ticket vending machine	Possibly	Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a priority and not needed currently – low uptake expected • May be beneficial for tourism – printable day pass ticket • Very expensive machines
Self-service reload kiosks	Yes	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added option for reloading fare cards

Payment options	Contextually applicable?	Financially feasible?	Reasoning
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular option in community engagement • Possibly reduce staff resources needed for reloading

Appendix D: Public engagement results summary

1. Introduction

Guelph Transit began reviewing the existing fare system, including structure, policies, programs, payment options and pricing, as a follow-up to the GTFRAP. After initial research on options that could feasibly be made to Guelph Transit’s fare system, the public engagement campaign was launched to guide the options for fare system changes that will be presented to Council.

2. Purpose and scope

The objective of the Fare Strategy community engagement campaign was to obtain feedback on the positives and negatives of the existing fare system, which fare programs will best meet residents’ needs, how fare programs should be funded, and how fare changes should be made.

3. Method

The public engagement campaign ran from March 23 to April 10, 2022 and used haveyoursay.guelph.ca as the main source for providing the public with information and obtaining feedback. There were several in-person events that took place following COVID-19 protocols as well. The goal of these various methods was to reach a wide range of citizens to ensure community representation. The following describes each method that was used for gathering public feedback.

3.1 Surveys

There were several surveys available for the public to complete. The main Fare Strategy survey was created to understand how citizens currently pay on Transit, how they would like to pay in the future, what fare programs they are interested in and/or supportive of, how fare programs should be

funded, and what the fare structure should look like. The main Fare Strategy survey was available for individuals to complete online at haveyoursay.guelph.ca, on paper and on iPads at open house events, and on paper at select locations, including City Hall and recreation centres.

Two Corporate Pass program surveys were also available on haveyoursay.guelph.ca. The Corporate Pass program: Employer survey created with the intention to gauge interest of local employers in providing a Corporate Pass program for their employees. While this survey was open to the public, communications were sent out via the City's 'Mind Your Business' newsletter requesting that employers complete the survey. The Corporate Pass program: Employee survey was created with the intention to gauge interest of employees at local businesses in the Corporate Pass program. While this survey was open to the public, communications were sent out via the City's 'Mind Your Business' newsletter requesting that employers ask their employees to complete the survey.

An online reload satisfaction survey was created to understand the satisfaction of those that regularly use the online fare card reload platform, onyourwayreload.guelph.ca. While this survey was open to the public, communications were sent out via email to customers that have a registered OnYourWay card with Guelph Transit.

An additional survey on youth semester and summer passes was open from June 1 to June 15, 2022. This survey was launched as a follow-up survey to gather more detailed information from the public on if discounted passes for high school students would be of interest and/or beneficial to our community. This was an idea that came up in initial engagement but had not been covered in the main Fare Strategy survey.

3.2 Open houses and intercepts

Several open house events were held at various locations throughout the City from March 23 to April 10, 2022. These locations included the Evergreen Senior Centre, the West End Recreation Centre, City Hall, the Main Library branch, Ontario Works, and Willow West Mall. Those that attended had the opportunity to read infographic boards, talk with staff, complete the full-length survey, and/or participate in the intercept sticker boards activity.

Additionally, staff visited several locations with the sticker boards for quick intercept responses from people on the go. These locations included Guelph Central Station, Riverside Park, Stone Road Mall, and the Woodlawn Smart Centre bus stops.

3.3 Virtual workshops

There were three virtual workshops that were held online via Webex Events and were broadcasted to Facebook as well. The workshops took place on Tuesday, March 29, 2022, at 1:30 p.m., Saturday, April 2, 2022, at 10:30 a.m., and Wednesday, April 6, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. All workshops were structured the same but were offered on different days and times to allow community members several opportunities to attend. The workshops began with a presentation on what the Fare Strategy entails and what feedback is needed. Then, an interactive portion of the workshop took place using the online platform, Mentimeter, where viewers could participate in providing feedback to pre-set questions live during the workshop. Additionally, attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments in Webex or on Facebook that staff answered live.

4. Results

4.1 Respondents

The public engagement campaign resulted in 777 total survey responses, including 675 Fare Strategy survey responses, 16 Corporate Pass program: Employer survey responses, 26 Corporate Pass program: Employee survey responses, and 60 online reload satisfaction survey responses. Additionally, there were approximately 350 in-person interactions at open house and intercept events as well as over 1,300 workshop video views, over 25 virtual workshop live viewers, and approximately 15 virtual workshop activity participants.

An additional 125 responses were received from the high school student discount pass survey that was launched as a follow-up survey to gather more information on this topic.

4.2 Survey responses

Fare Strategy survey

There were 675 responses to this survey that were either completed online, on paper via the survey collection drop boxes, or in person at an engagement event on paper or online.

Question 1

Of those that responded to the Fare Strategy survey, 56.9% said they or their family members currently use an OnYourWay card to pay when getting on the bus. Additionally, 14.2% said they use cash, 13.6% said University of Guelph student card, 10.0% said mobile app, 0.7% said specialty cards (ex. Welcome to Guelph, PAL, CNIB, Veterans), and 0.7% said QR tickets

(specialized program). The remaining 3.9% said that no one in their household rides the bus. Respondents could select more than one option.

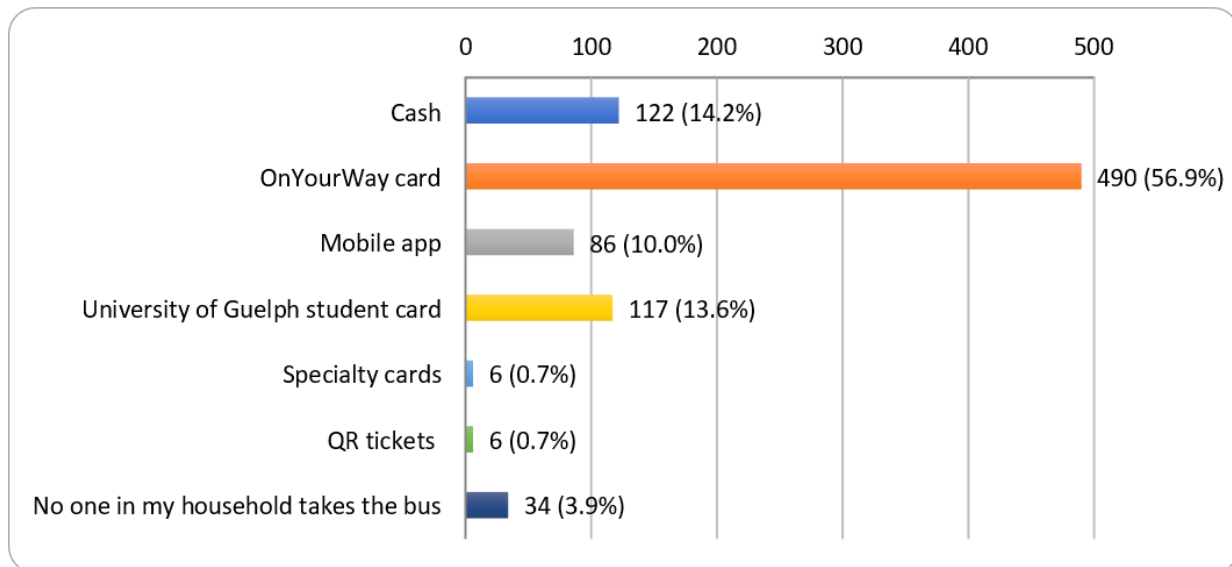


Figure 4. How do you or members of your household currently pay when getting on the bus?

Question 1.1

The respondents that said they pay with an OnYourWay card were asked what they load their card with. 56.4% said e-rides while the other 43.6% said a monthly pass.

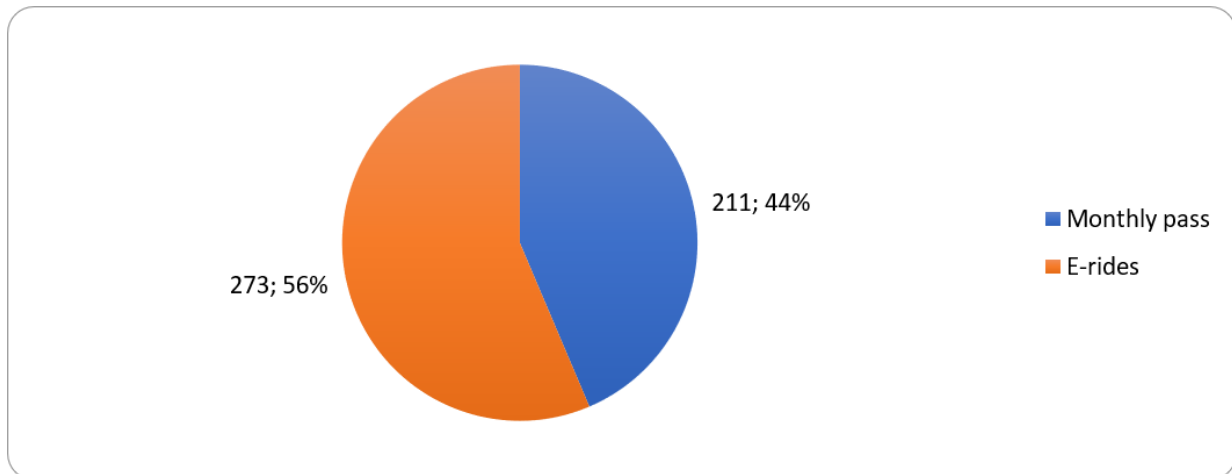


Figure 5. What kind of OnYourWay card do you have?

Question 1.2

These respondents were further asked, "How do you usually load your OnYourWay card?" 83.7% said they load online at

onyourwayreload.guelph.ca, 12.0% said they load at a City facility (ex. City Hall, museum, libraries, recreation centres, Guelph Central Station), and the remaining 4.3% said they load at a retailer (stores located around the city).

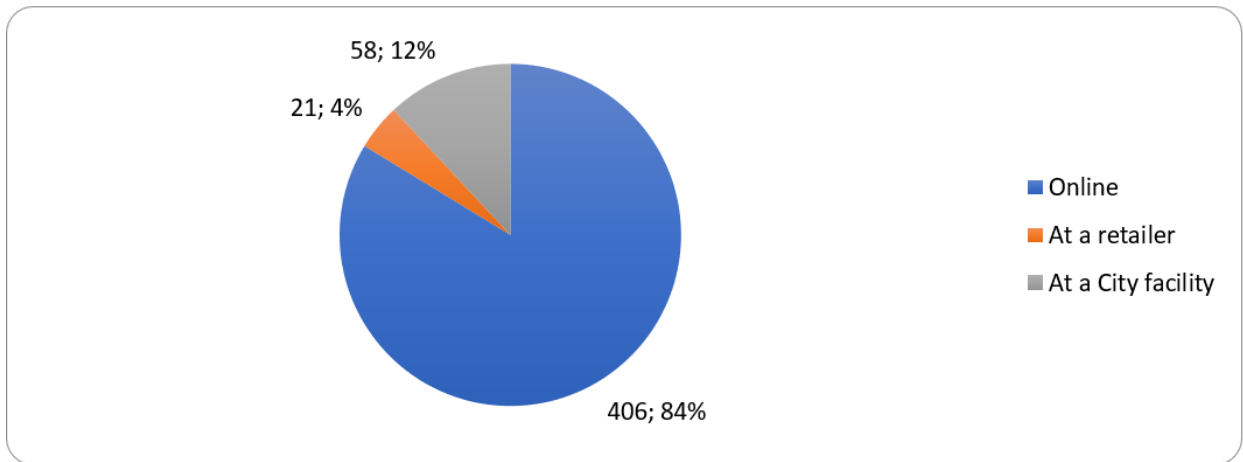


Figure 6. How do you usually load your OnYourWay card?

Question 1.2.1

The respondents that said they load online were asked, “How is your experience loading your card online?” with the option to select more than one response. Most responses were positive, with 70.4% saying it is easy, 62.7% saying it is convenient, and 38.8% saying it is fast. Of the negative responses received, 5.2% said it is hard to understand what I need to do, 5.0% said it is inconvenient, and 1.7% said it is slow.

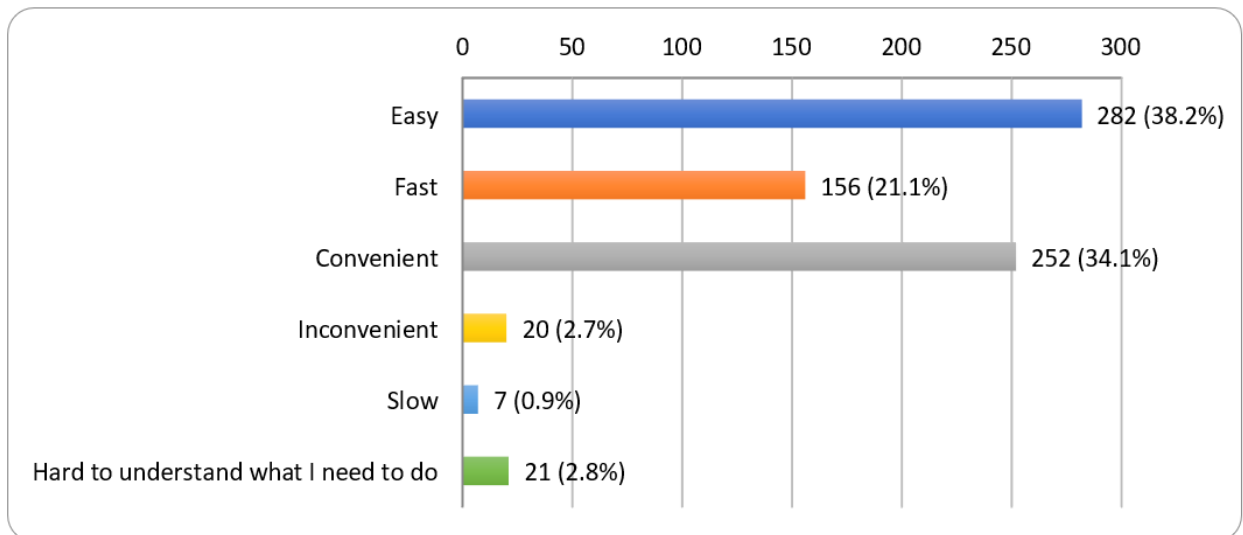


Figure 7. How is your experience loading your card online?

Question 1.2.2

The respondents that said they load in person at a retailer were asked how far they must travel to reload their card. 36.7% said they do not have travel at all out of their way to reload their card and 40.0% said they only have to travel five minutes or less. An additional 13.3% said they must travel 10 minutes or less and 10% said they must travel more than 10 minutes.

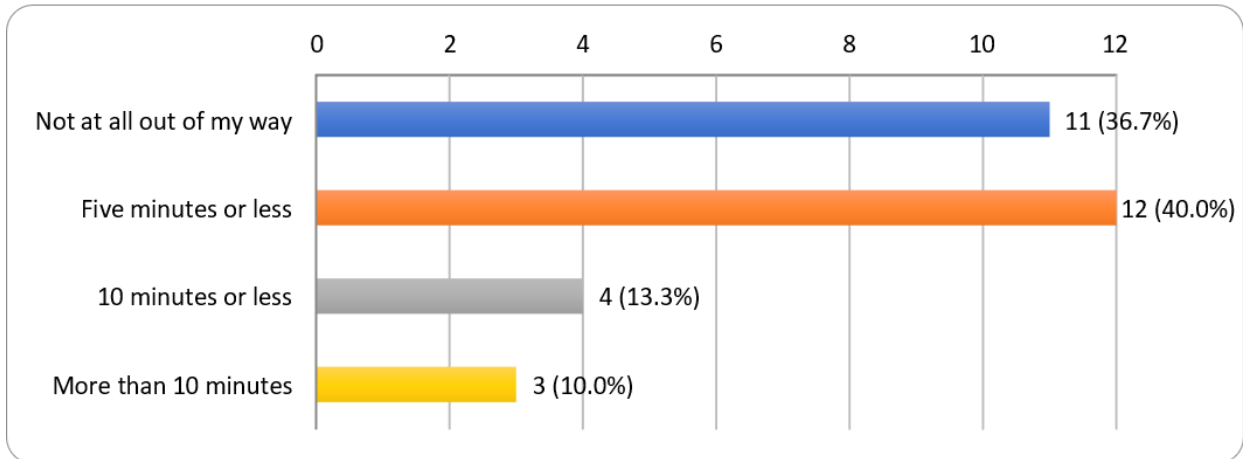


Figure 8. How far do you have to travel out of your way to reload your card?

Question 1.2.3

The respondents that said they load in person at a retailer or City facility were asked if they would be willing to use a self-service machine if it were available at City facilities. 60.6% said they would choose to reload at the self-service machine while 34.8% said they would still choose to reload with a customer service agent. The remaining 4.5% said they would rather not reload at a City facility.

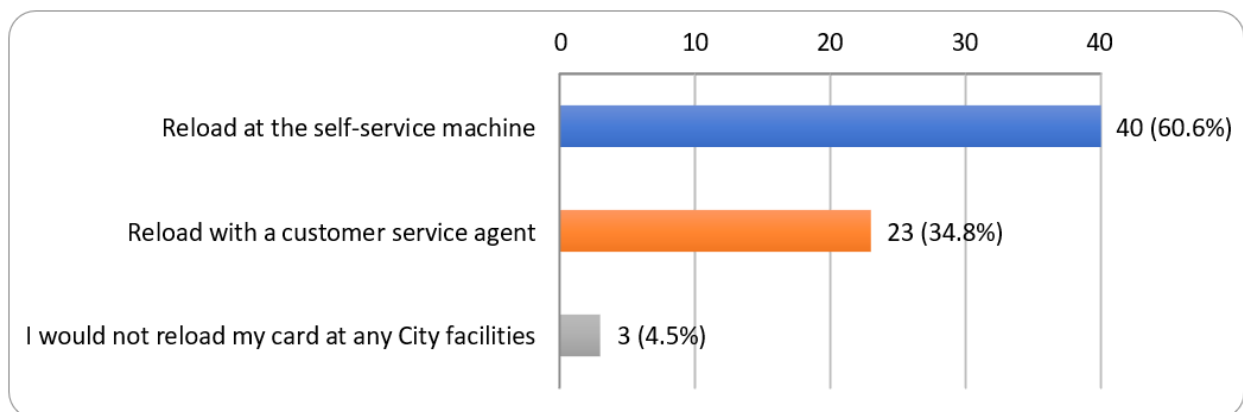


Figure 9. If a self-service OnYourWay card reload machine were available at City facilities, how would you choose to reload?

Question 2

All respondents of the survey were asked about what payment methods they would like to use when riding the bus in the future. Respondents were able to select more than one option. Paying with an OnYourWay card remained the most popular choice at 35.5%, with 26.4% choosing an OnYourWay card that is reloaded online and 9.1% choosing an OnYourWay card that is reloaded at a retailer. 35.4% of respondents chose using a debit/credit card, which is currently not an option, with 19.8% choosing to use a physical debit or credit card, 8.8% choosing Apple Pay, and 6.8% choosing Android Pay as their preferred method. An additional 14.6% selected the mobile app and 11.7% selected cash. The remaining 2.7% chose 'other' and were asked to specify.

Of those that responded 'other,' more than half said they would like to pay using a PRESTO card. Additional responses included using physical bus tickets, University of Guelph student cards, and day passes.

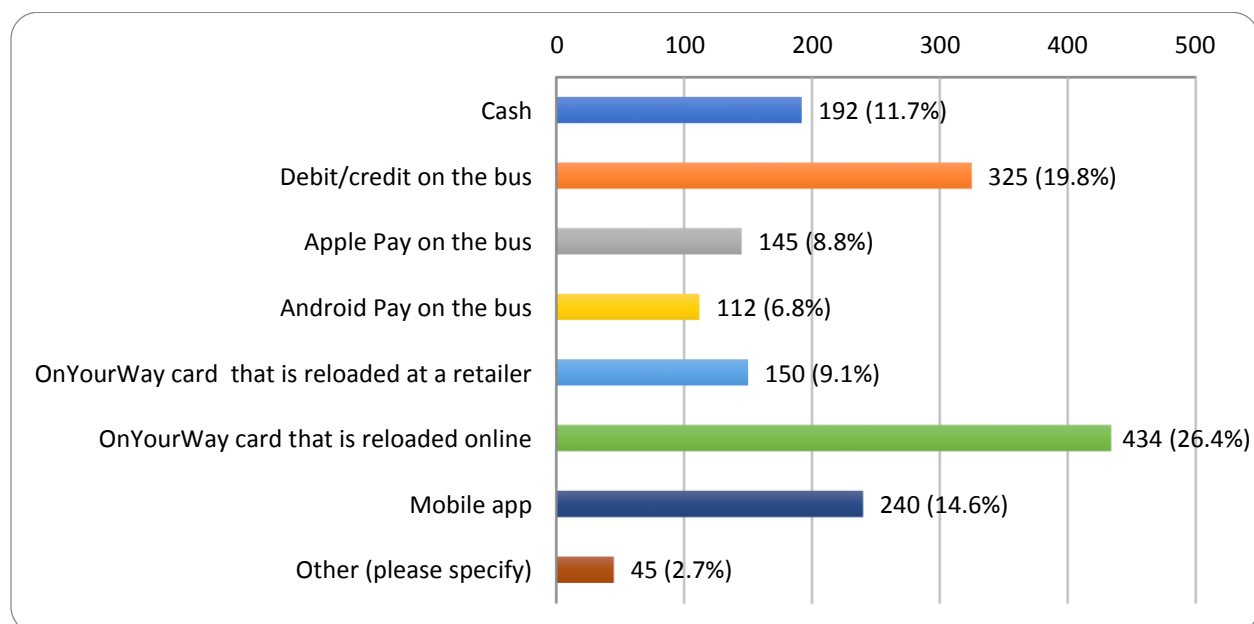


Figure 10. When paying on the bus, how would you like to pay?

Question 3

All respondents were asked if they had ideas for other payment methods not mentioned in the previous question. Of the 83 respondents (12.4% of all respondents) to this question that suggested a different method of payment, 49.4% said implementing PRESTO cards, 20.5% said providing free transit by increasing taxes, and 12.0% said returning to physical tickets and tokens. An additional 4.8% said paying with a better mobile app, 4.8% said

day passes, 3.6% said disposable multi-ride cards, 2.4% said annual passes, 1.2% said Corporates Passes, and 1.2% said Conestoga College U pass.

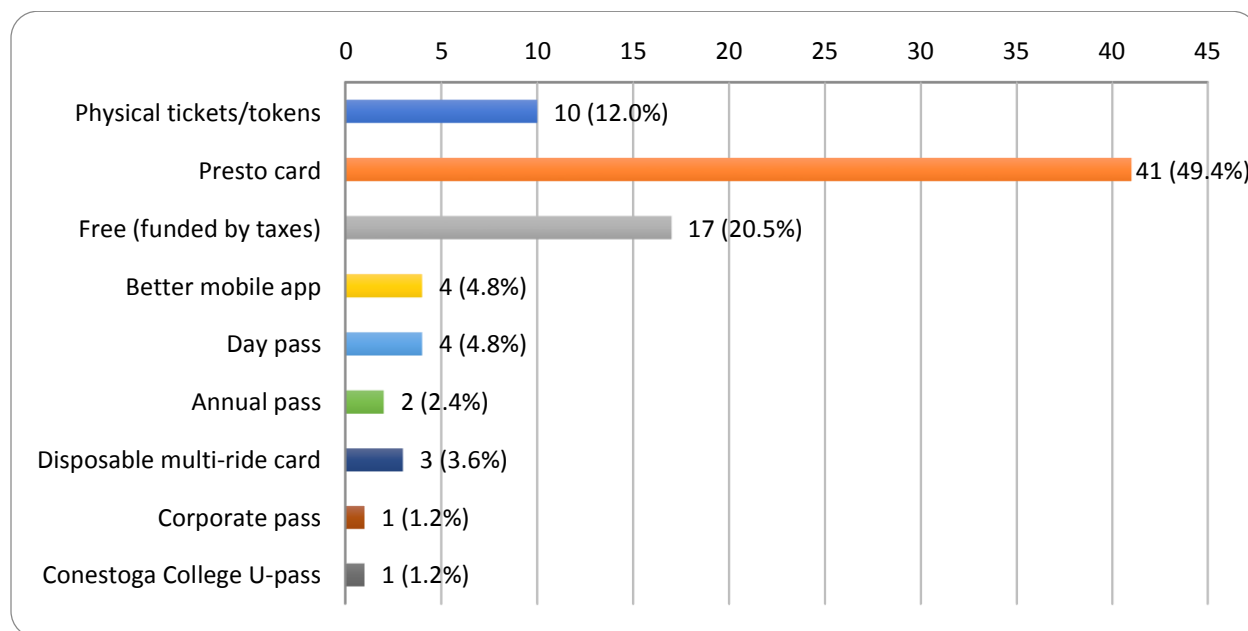


Figure 11. Are there other ways of paying for transit we should explore?

Question 4

Respondents were then asked which option makes the most sense to them in terms of monthly pass options. 41.4% said a loyalty program, which would have the user pay their regular fare a certain number of times, then ride free for the rest of the calendar month. 33.9% said a rolling monthly pass in which the user would pay up-front, and the pass becomes effective on the date of purchase and expires one month from that date. 21.4% said a monthly pass, which is what is currently offered, the user pays up-front for the calendar month.

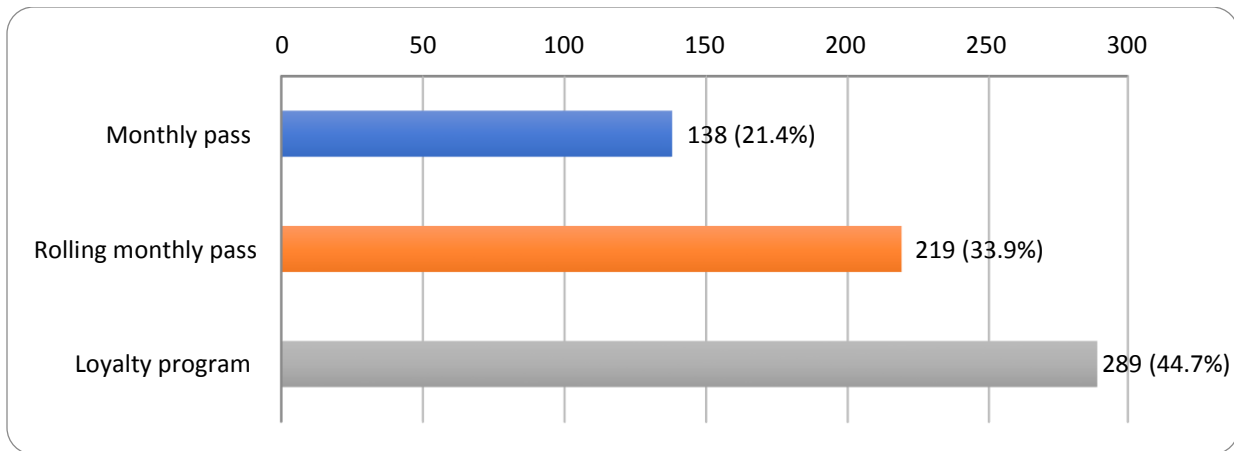


Figure 12. Which monthly payment option makes the most sense to you?

Question 5

This question asked respondents what kind of bus pass options should be explored for Guelph high school students. Respondents could select more than one option. 35.5% said to explore high school semester passes, 31.5% said to keep monthly passes for high school students, and 29.0% said to explore a two-month summer pass program. The remaining 4.0% said 'other' in which responses consisted of suggestions for high school students to ride free all year round or in the summer only, for a high school annual pass to be made available, and for Transit to partner with school boards to provide students with discounted or free passes.

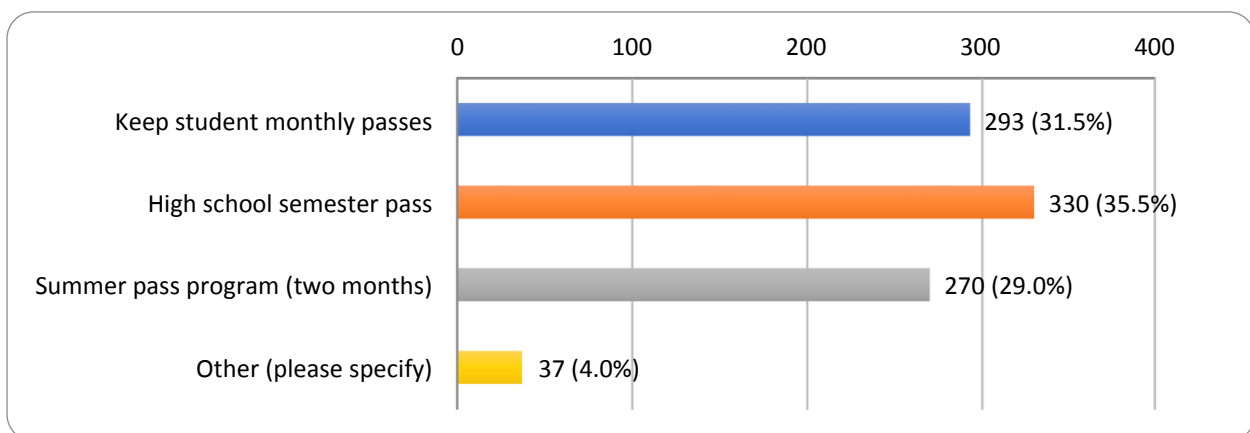


Figure 13. Area high school students have an option for monthly passes now, but are there other options we should explore that are even better?

Question 6

All respondents were then asked if they had used the newly launched Kids Ride Free program. 65.9% said they had not used it and were not interested in using it while 25.0% said they had not used it but wanted to. Another 7.2% said they were already a transit user but had also used the program, and the remaining 1.8% said they became a new transit user because they could use the Kids Ride Free program.

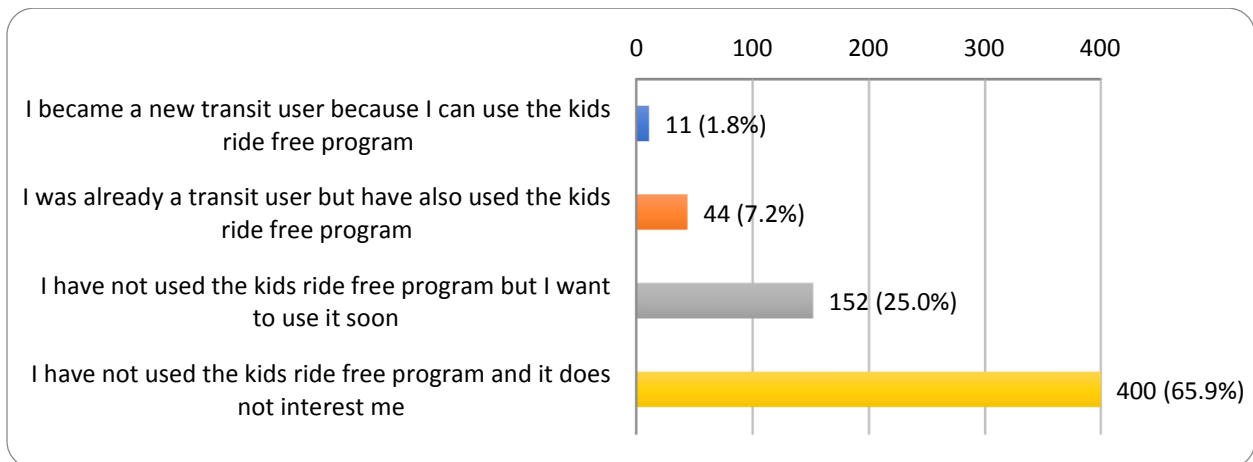


Figure 14. Have you used the Kids Ride Free program for your family or those you care for?

Question 7

This question was followed up with asking respondents whether Kids Ride Free program, which is currently a one-year pilot program, should become permanent. 90.3% of respondents wanted to see the program become permanent while only 9.7% of respondents wanted to return to charging kids aged 5-12 years old regular fares at the end of trial period.

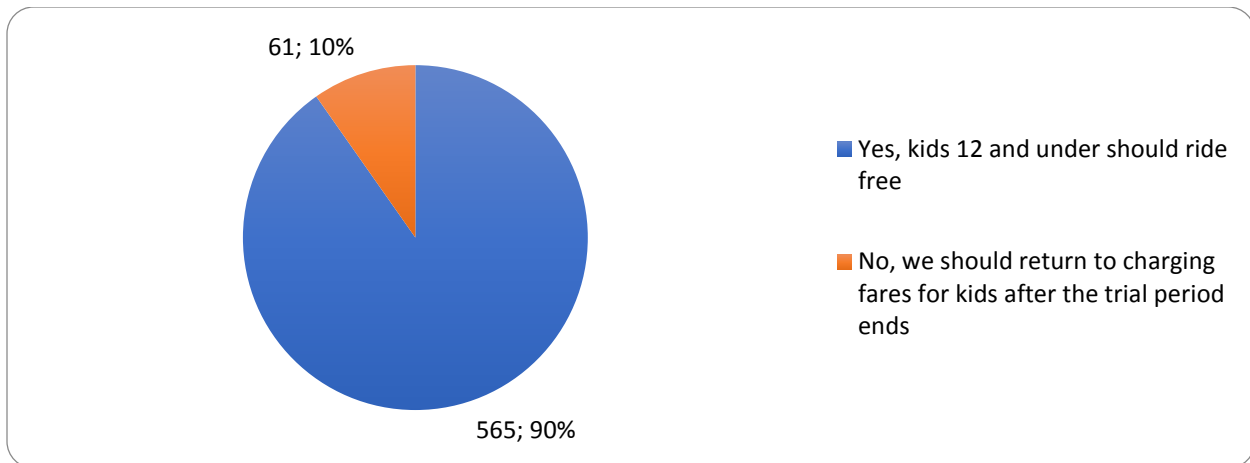


Figure 15. Would you like to see the Kids Ride Free program continue permanently?

Question 8

All respondents were asked if they could choose a group to receive free fares, who would it be for? As this was an open-ended question, there were a range of responses, but the Kids Ride Free program was the most popular choice with 30.4%, split into 21.9% saying kids 12 and under should ride free and 8.5% saying kids under 18 should ride free. Seniors should ride free was also a popular choice with 28.9%. Additional responses included 12.0% saying low-income families/individuals, 8.7% saying people with disabilities, 6.8% saying everyone, 2.8% saying working class individuals, 2.4% saying at risk/homeless individuals, and 0.2% saying veterans. Other responses focused on providing free fares for everyone in certain situations, such as the 1.9% saying transit should be free for special events, 1.2% suggesting promotional free transit days or weeks, 0.7% saying transit should be free in the evenings, and 0.5% saying an emergency fare fund should be available for those who forgot to reload their fare card. Another 0.7% said there should not be any free fare programs.

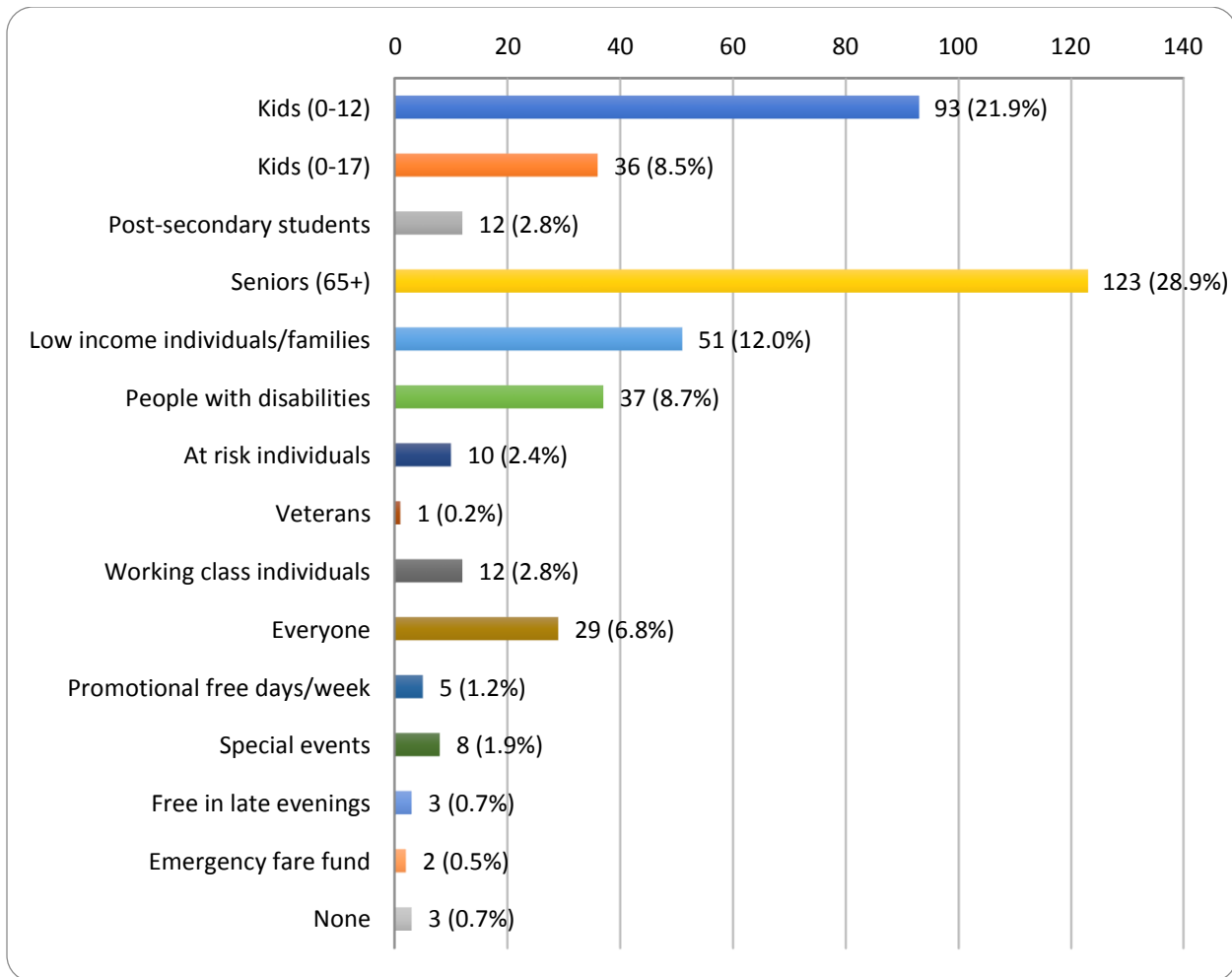


Figure 16. If you could choose one ride free program that is right for Guelph, who would it be for?

Question 9

Respondents were then asked if a Corporate Pass program, where the City discounts a percentage of a monthly pass and an employer matches that per cent so they can offer their employees a discounted monthly pass, would be of interest to them. Of those that this question applied to, 35.8% said they would ride transit more often if their employer offered a Corporate Pass, 29.8% said they already ride transit frequently and would be interested in a Corporate Pass if it were available to them, and 6.8% said they already ride transit with a Corporate Pass and they love it. The remaining 25.3% said their employer does not offer a Corporate Pass and it is not of interest to them as well as 2.3% said their employer offers a Corporate Pass but they are not interested.

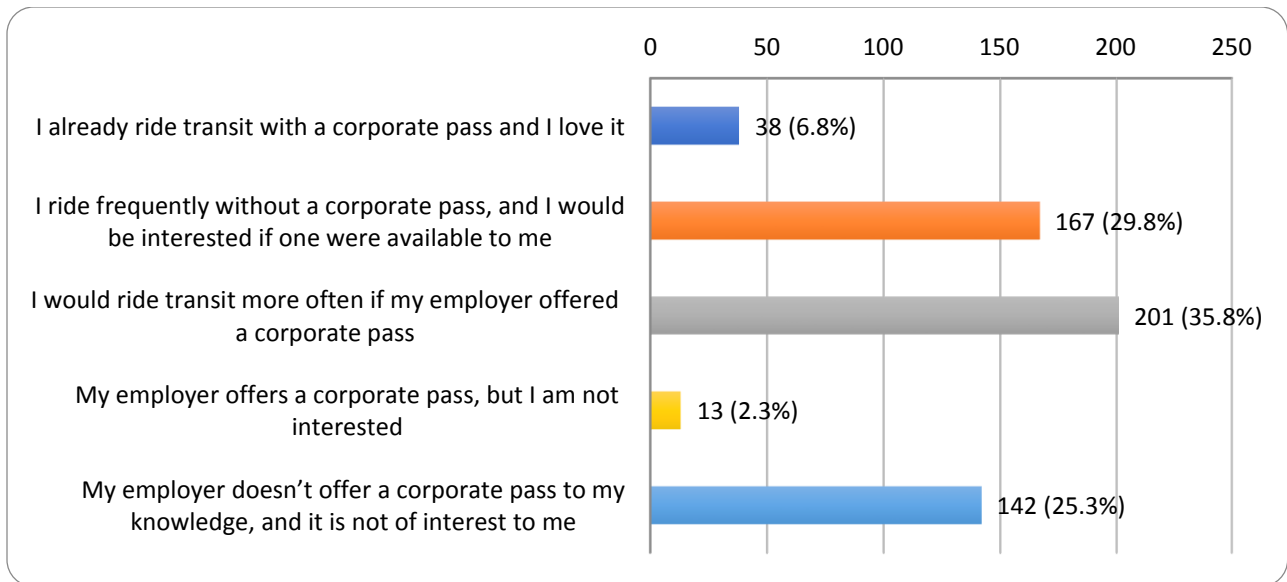


Figure 17. Is a Corporate Pass program like this of interest to you?

Question 10

Respondents were reminded that providing free and discounted fare programs comes at a cost and were then asked what kind of funding should be explored to cover the costs of a program. More than one option could be selected for this question. 55.7% of respondents selected corporate sponsorships, where companies would partner with Transit to offer free or discounted fares. Another 24.6% chose making City taxes a little higher and 9.9% said making fares a little higher. The remaining 9.8% said 'other' and were asked to specify. These responses primarily included suggestions for taxing local large corporations, reallocating City budget funds to Transit, federal and provincial grants and sponsorships, increasing parking fees to fund Transit programs, and running fundraisers/having the option to donate fares.

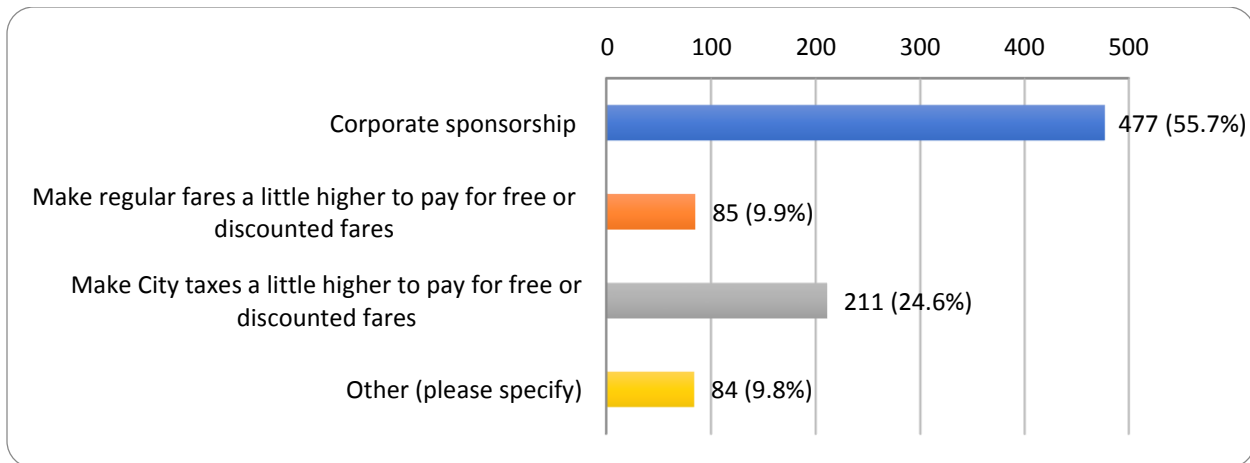


Figure 18. If a free or discounted fare program is offered, what kind of funding should we explore to cover costs?

Question 11

All respondents were told that Guelph Transit is reviewing customer fares to ride the bus. They were then asked, “If we were to make a change, how would you like to see that change happen?” More than three quarters (76.9%) of respondents said they would prefer small changes every year as required to keep up with expenses while 23.1% said they’d prefer one larger change every several years.

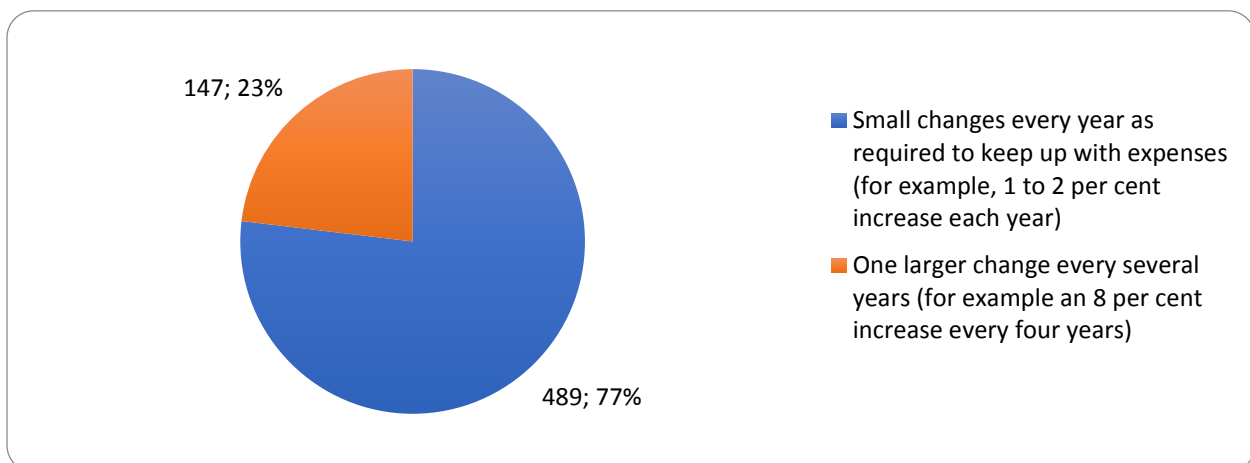


Figure 19. If fares must be changed, how would you like to see that change happen?

Question 12

This question asked respondents about what fare structure they think is best suited for Guelph. Almost two thirds (63.8%) of respondents said they prefer an age-based fare system, which is the current system, and provides discounts based on the age of the user. The remaining 36.2% said they

prefer an income-based fare system, which provides discounts based on the income of the user.

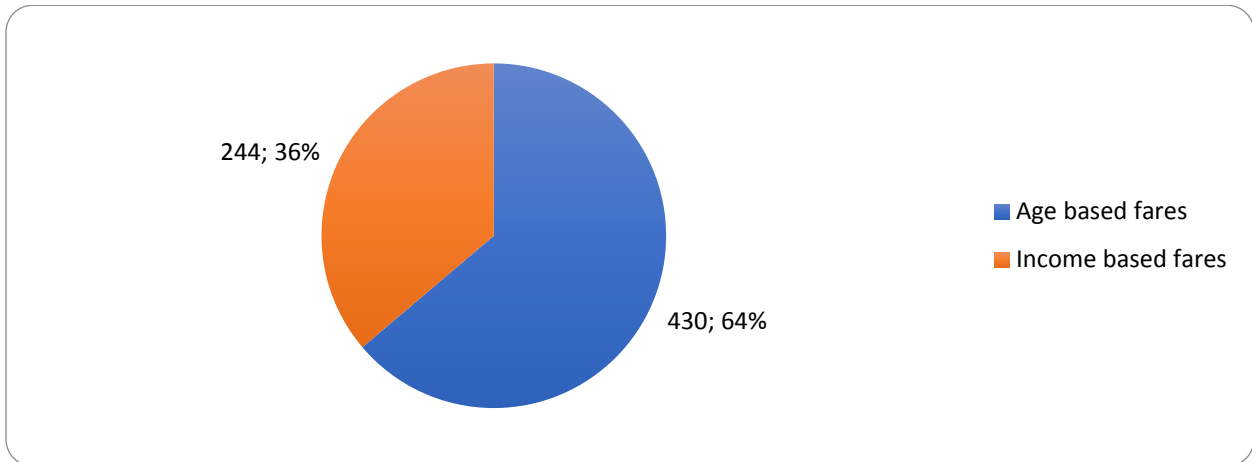


Figure 20. Which fare structure is the right fit for Guelph?

Demographic Questions

The following questions were asked to get an understanding of who completed the survey and if any groups were notably missing from responses.

Question 13

All respondents were asked how often they take the bus. 34.1% of respondents said they take the bus almost every day, 21.4% said a couple times per week, 12.5% said 1-5 times per month, and 12.2% said often several times per day. Additionally, 7.8% said they take the bus 1-5 times per year, 6.5% said a dozen times per year, and 5.5% said less than once per year.

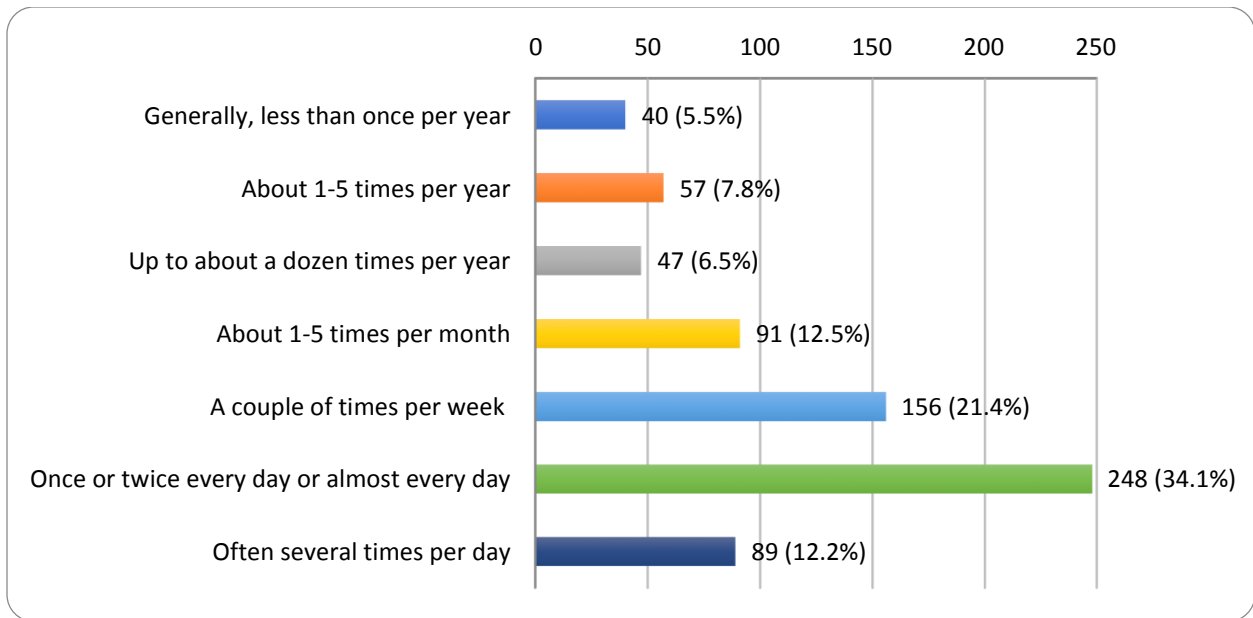


Figure 21. How often do you take the bus?

Question 14

Respondents were also asked if they have access to a personal vehicle. Approximately two thirds (64%) said they do not have access to a personal vehicle and the remaining 36% said they do.

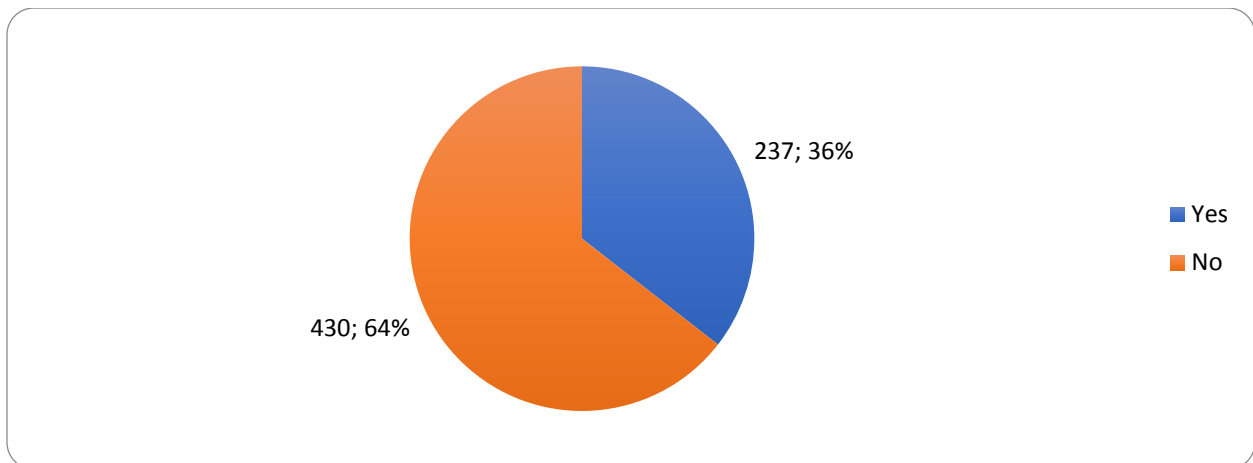


Figure 22. Do you have access to a personal vehicle?

Question 15

Respondents were asked about their age range. 24.4% of respondents said they are aged 25-34, 22.8% are aged 18-24, 13.9% are aged 35-44, 11.5% are aged 45-54, 10.4% are aged 55-64, 9.2% are aged 65-74, 4.8% are aged 13-17, and 2.9% are aged 75 and above.

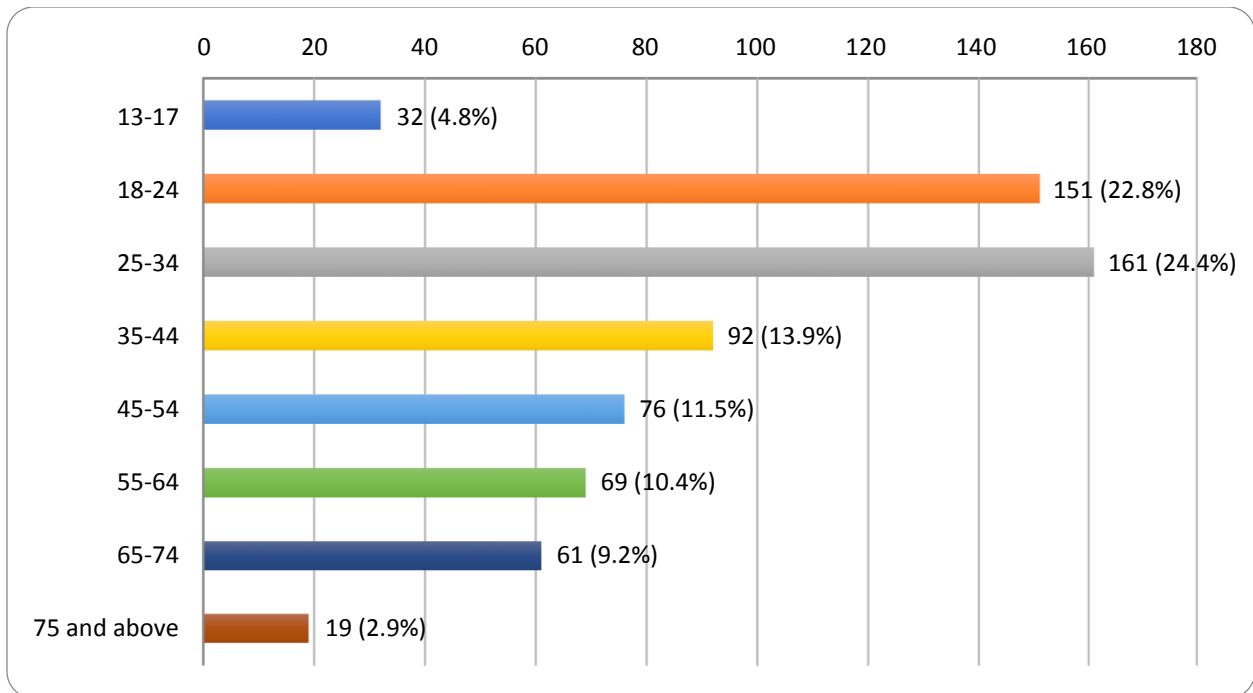


Figure 23. What is your age range?

Question 16

Respondents were asked how many children living in their household are under the age of 12. Most respondents (83.7%) do not have any children living in their household. Additionally, 9.6% have one child in their household, 5.0% have two children, 1.2% have three children, 0.3% have four children, and 0.2% have five or more children.

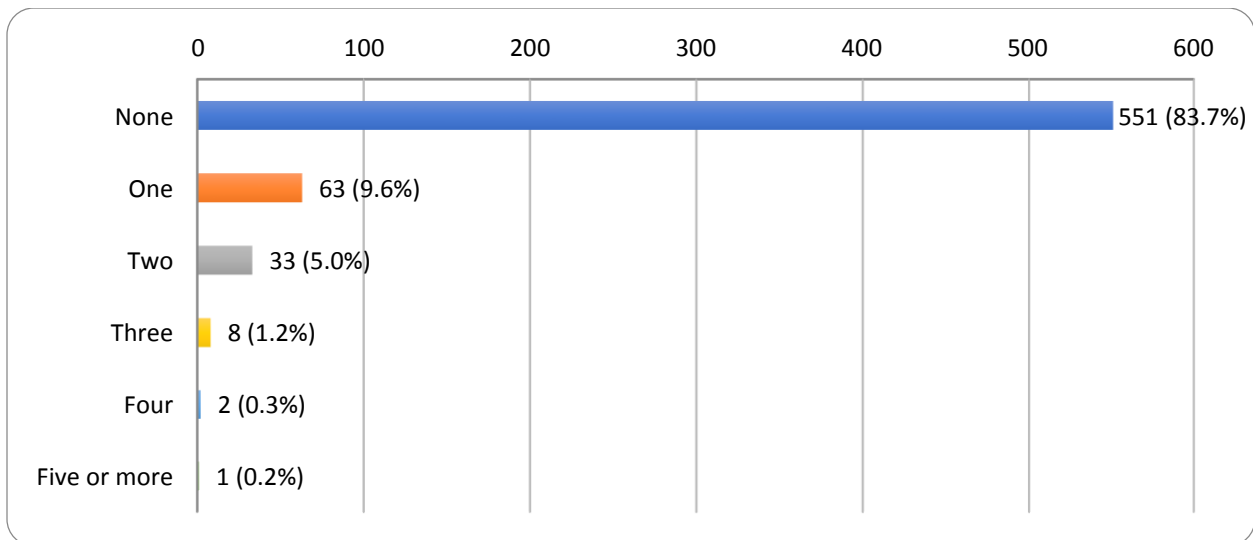


Figure 24. How many children are in your household (under age 12)?

Question 17

Respondents were also asked how many youths aged 13-18 live in their household. Most respondents (79.4%) do not have any youths living in their household. Additionally, 12.2% have one youth living in their household, 6.9% have two youths, 0.8% have three youths, and 0.8% have four youths. There were no respondents with five or more youths living in their household.

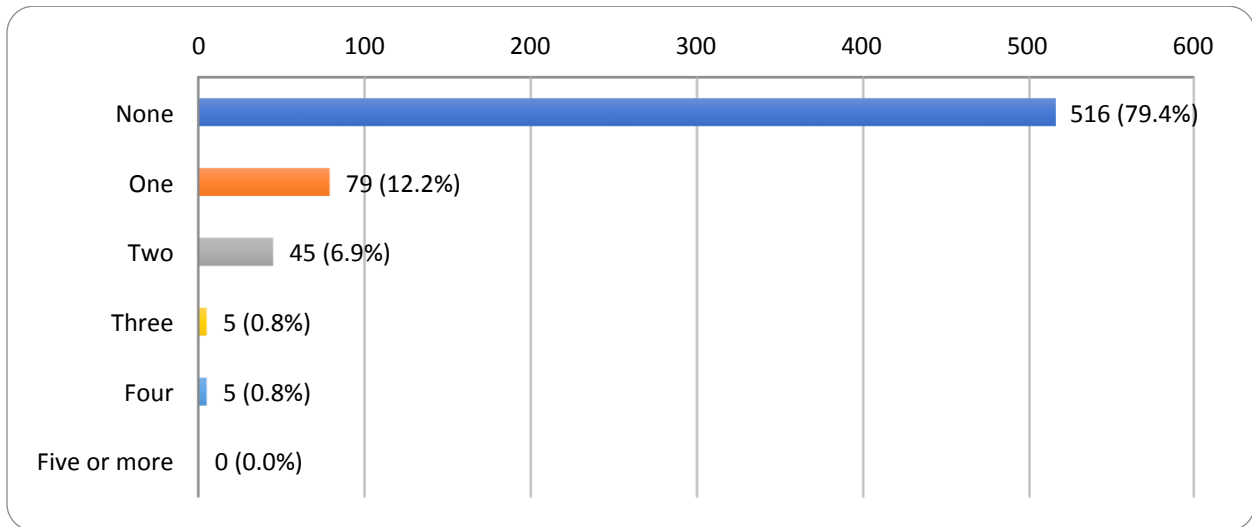


Figure 25. How many youths are in your household (aged 13-18)?

Question 18

Respondents were asked what their annual household income is. 26.6% of respondents said their annual household income is less than \$25,000; 22.5% said their annual household income is between \$25,001 and \$50,000; and 19.3% said their annual household income is between \$50,001 and \$100,000. Another 8.6% said their annual household income is between \$100,001 to \$150,000, and 4.9% said their annual household income is more than \$150,000. 18.1% said they prefer not to answer.

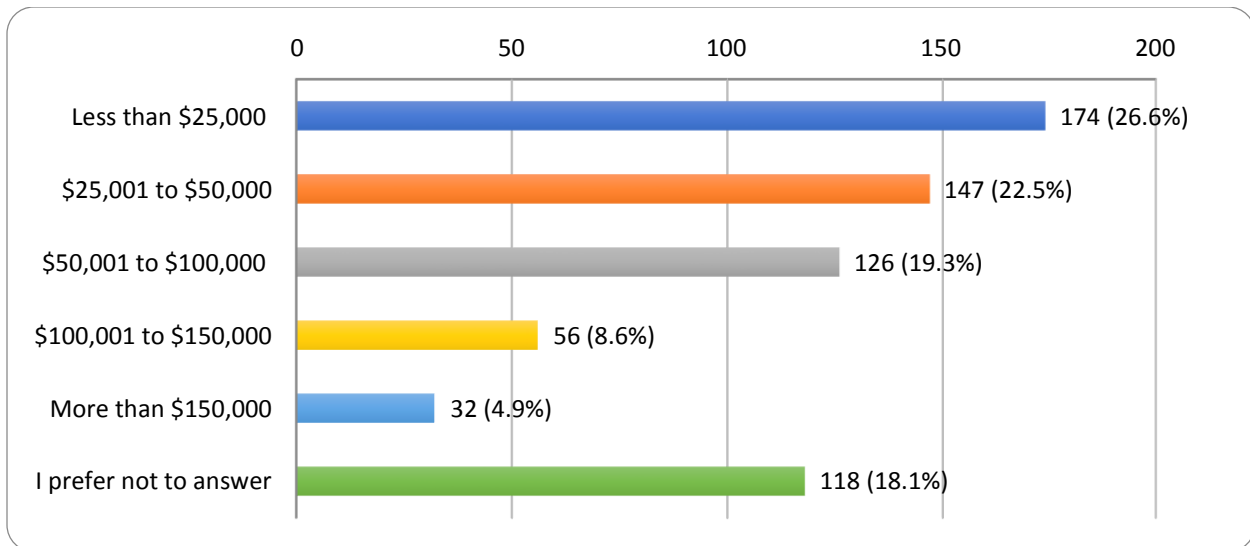


Figure 26. What is your annual household income?

Question 19

Respondents were asked if they identify as a member of an ethnic or racialized group. 73% of respondents said they do not while 14% said they do. 13% said they prefer not to answer.

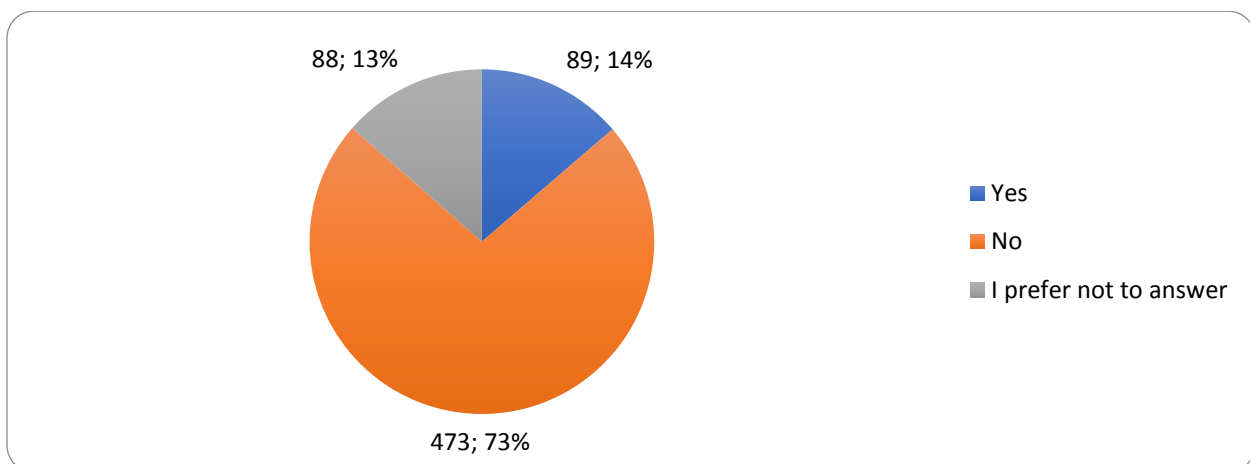


Figure 27. Do you identify as a member of an ethnic or racialized group?

Question 20

Respondents were asked if they, or someone in their household, identify as a person with disabilities and/or have accessibility needs. 71% of respondents answered no while 21% answered yes. 8% said they prefer not to answer.

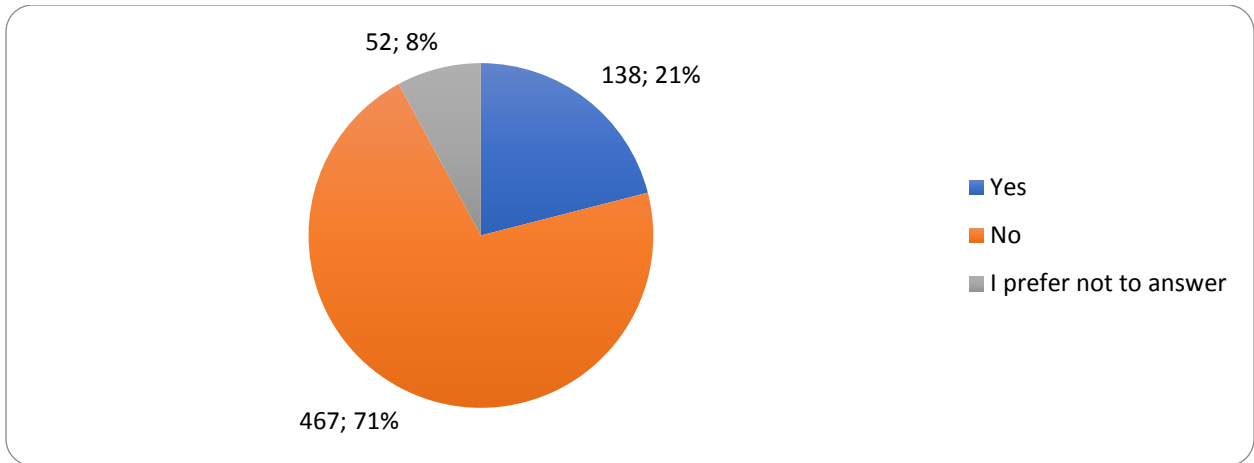


Figure 28. Do you identify as a person with a disability or are you or anyone in your household a person with accessibility needs?

Corporate Pass program: Employer survey

There were 16 responses to this survey, some of which employers completed independently online while others were completed via verbal interview and responses were entered by Transit staff.

Question 1

Respondents were first asked how many employees they have in total. 37.5% of employers that responded have between 250 and 499 employees, and 18.8% have between 50 and 249 employees. Additionally, 12.5% have more than 1500 employees and another 12.5% have less than 50 employees. Finally, 6.3% have between 500 and 799, 6.3% have between 750 and 999, and 6.3% have between 1000 and 1499.

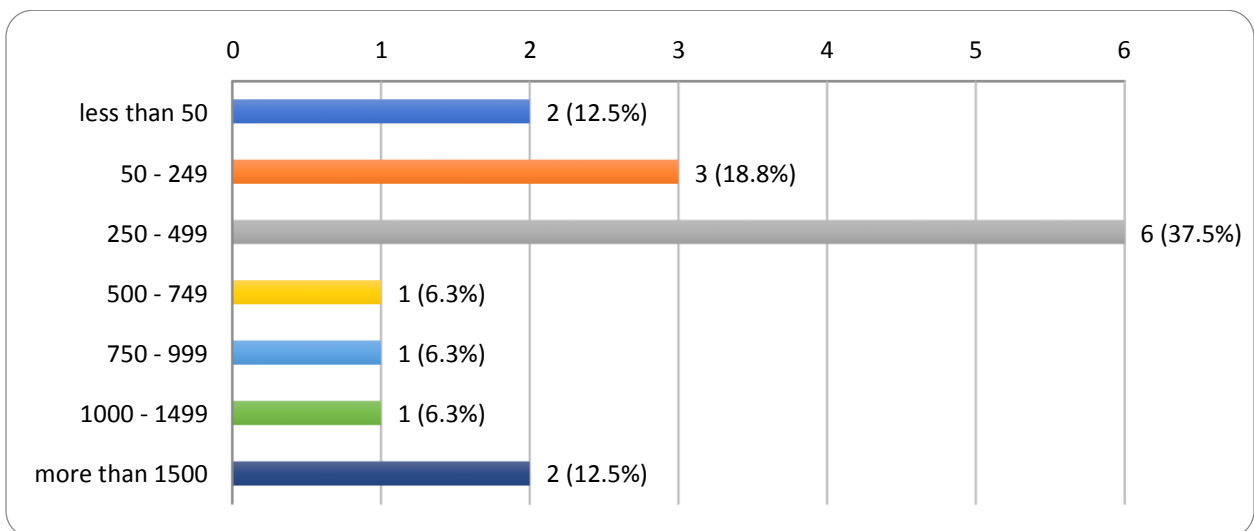


Figure 29. How many employees do you have in total?

Question 2

Respondents were asked for the breakdown of what modes their employees use to get to work.

Question 2.1

71.4% of respondents said that 80% or more of their employees get to work by driving a private vehicle alone. Another 21.4% said that 20% to 39% of their employees drive alone and the remaining 7.1% said that 40% to 59% of their employees drive alone.

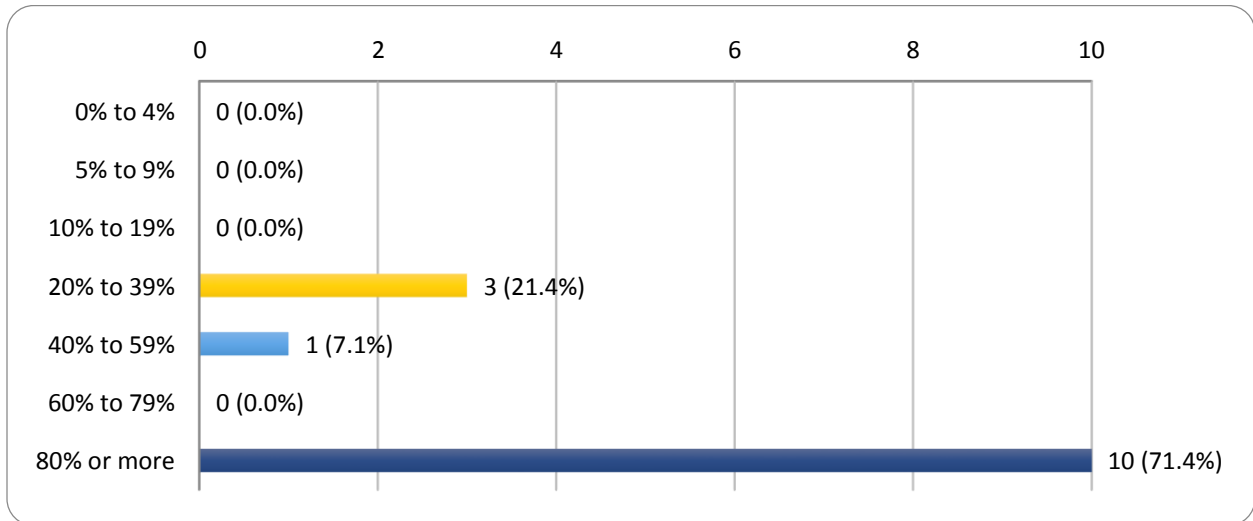


Figure 30. What percentage of your employees get to work by driving alone?

Question 2.2

42.9% of respondents said that 0% to 4% of their employees get to work by carpooling. 28.6% said 5% to 9% of their employees carpool, 7.1% said 10% to 19% of their employees carpool, and another 7.1% said 20% to 39% of their employees carpool. The remaining 14.3% said 40% to 59% of their employees carpool.

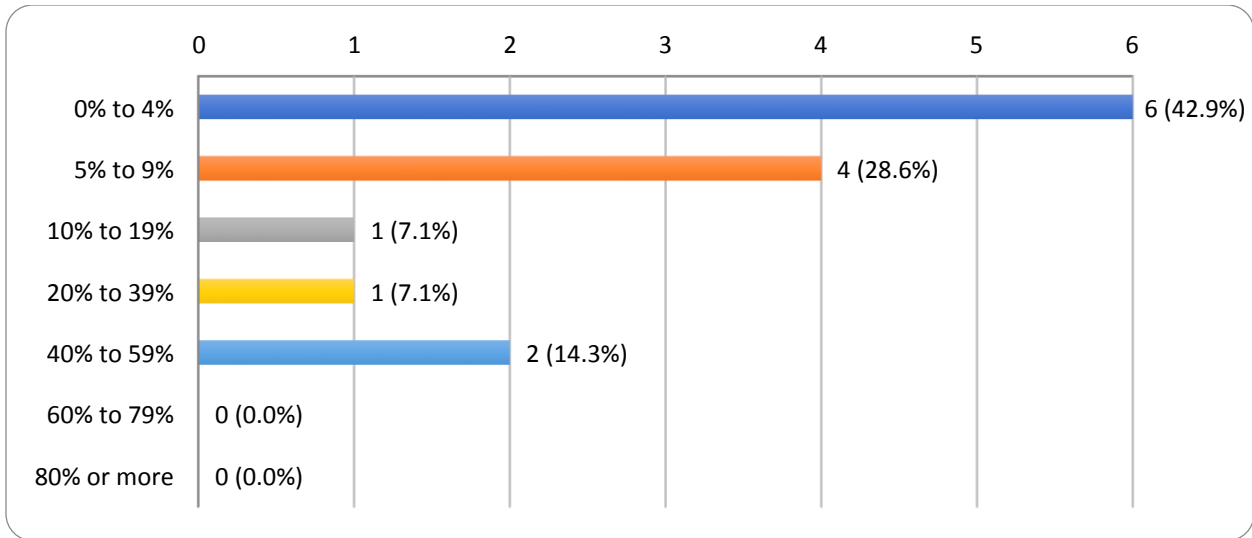


Figure 31. What percentage of your employees get to work by carpooling?

Question 2.3

85.7% of respondents said 0% to 4% of their employees get to work by taxi, Uber, or similar car for hire. The remaining 14.3% said 5% to 9% of their employees get to work by a car for hire.

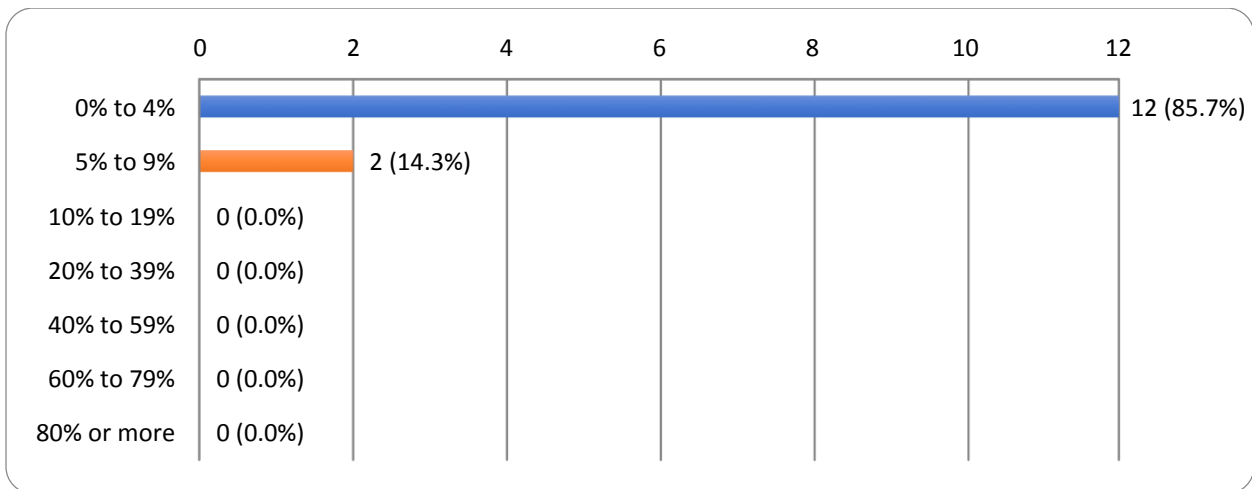


Figure 32. What percentage of your employees get to work by taxi, Uber, or similar car for hire?

Question 2.4

35.7% of respondents said that 10% to 19% of their employees get to work by taking public transit. 28.6% said 5% to 9% of their employees take transit, 21.4% said 20% to 39% of their employees take transit, and 7.1% said 40% to 59% of their employees take transit. The remaining 7.1% said 0% to 4% of their employees take transit.

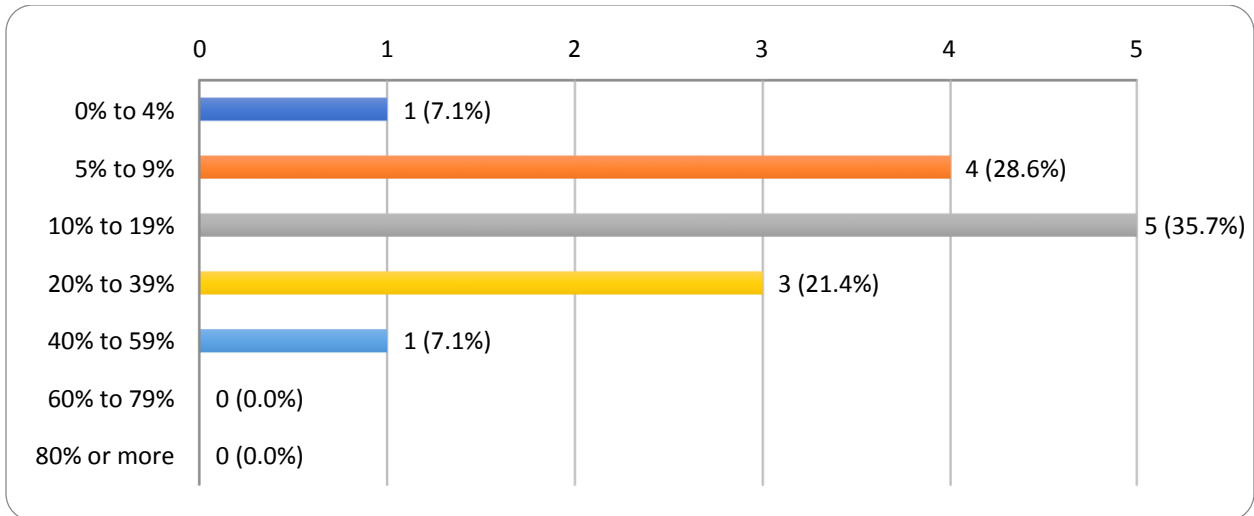


Figure 33. What percentage of your employees get to work by taking public transit?

Question 2.5

57.1% of respondents said that 0% to 4% of their employees get to work using active transportation, such as by bike, scooter, or walking. Another 35.7% said 5% to 9% of their employees use active transportation, and 7.1% said 10% to 19% of their employees use active transportation.

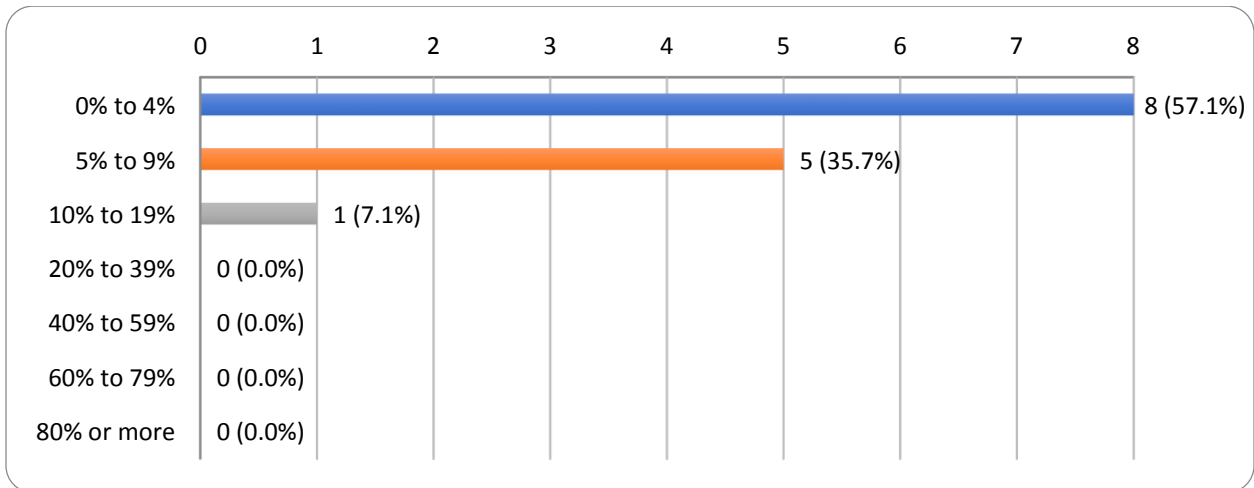


Figure 34. What percentage of your employees get to work by using active transportation?

Question 3

Respondents were asked if transit access is a part of their employee retention plans. 56.3% of respondents said that, yes, transit access is included in these plans. Another 18.8% said that transit was not currently part of their retention plans but wanted to include it, while 12.5% said no

because there is no access to transit at their facility. The remaining 6.3% said no, and it is not something they wish to include in their retention plans.

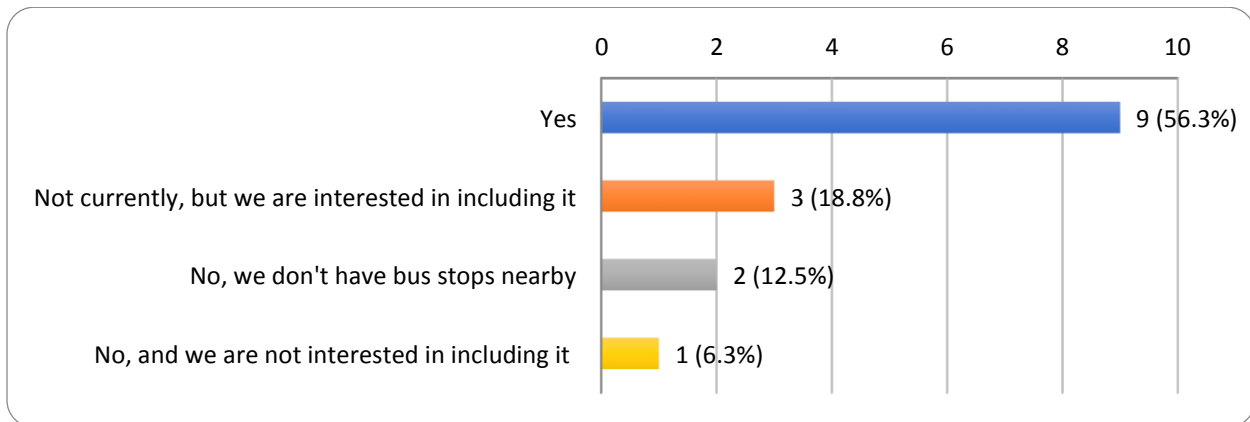


Figure 35. Is transit access factored into your employee attraction and retention plans or measurement?

Question 4

This question was followed up by explaining to respondents what a Corporate Pass is, in which both the City and the employer contribute to discounted monthly passes for employees. They were then asked if they felt that a Corporate Pass would benefit their employee retention plan. 62.5% of respondents said, yes, a Corporate Pass would benefit their employee retention plan. The remaining 37.5% said, no, it would not.

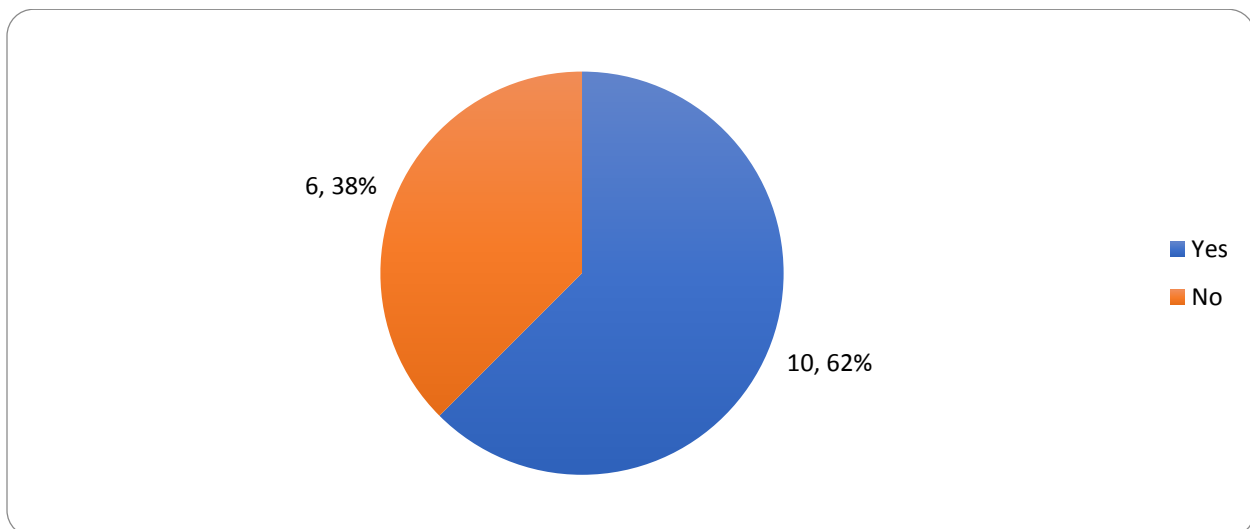


Figure 36. Could offering a Corporate Pass benefit your employee attraction and retention efforts?

Question 5

Respondents were then asked to quantify offering a Corporate Pass by determining what kind of discount is appropriate for employers to cover. 46.7% of respondents felt that 10% was an appropriate amount for the employer to cover, 13.3% felt that 5% was an appropriate amount for the employer to cover, and the remaining 40.0% said 'other' and were asked to specify.

One third of those that said 'other' felt that more than 10% but less than 20% was appropriate. Another third said more than 20% was appropriate. The remaining third either were not sure what the appropriate discount should be or felt the employer should not have to pay anything.

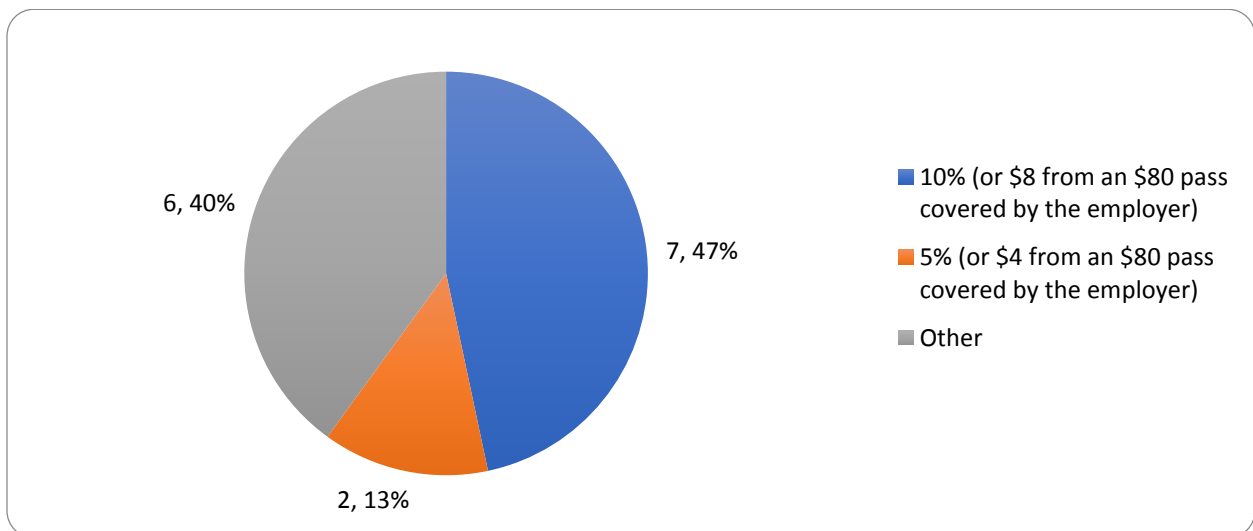


Figure 37. A monthly transit pass for adults currently costs \$80. If we were to offer Corporate Pass programs for companies of your size, what kind of discount is appropriate for the employer to cover?

Corporate Pass program – Employee Survey

There were 26 responses to this survey that were completed online at haveyoursay.guelph.ca.

Question 1

Respondents were asked if their employer currently offers a Corporate Pass. 77.0% of respondents said, no, their employer does not currently offer a Corporate Pass. 11.5% said yes, their employer does offer a Corporate Pass, and another 11.5% said they were not sure whether their employer offered a Corporate Pass.

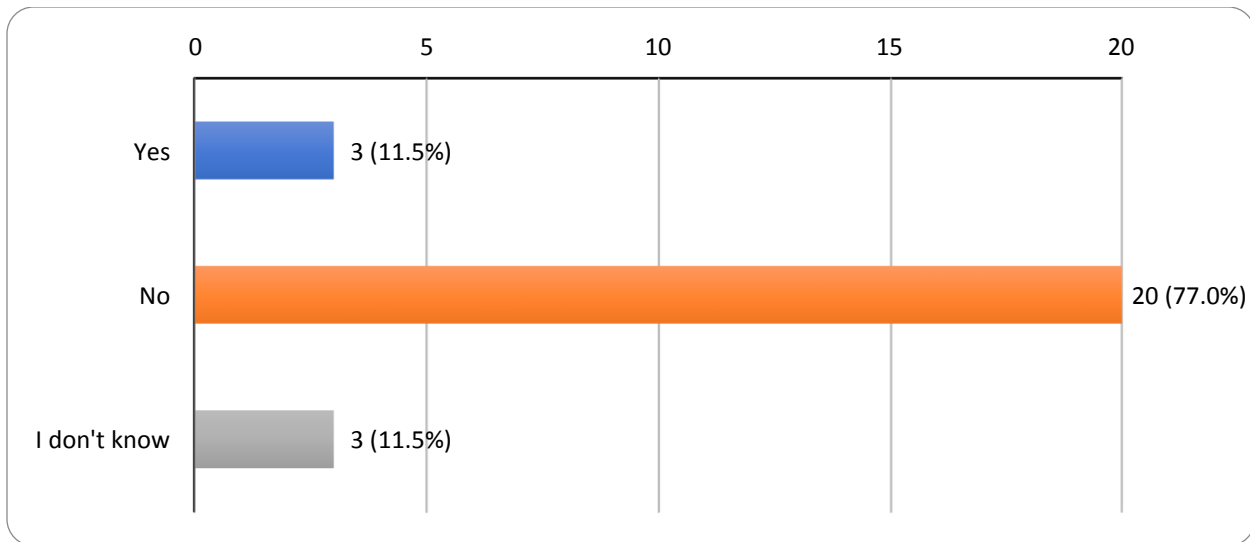


Figure 38. Does your employer currently offer a transit Corporate Pass?

Question 1.1

The three respondents to question 1 that said their employer offers a Corporate Pass were asked a follow up question to determine whether they participated in the program. 66.7% said no, they do not use a Corporate Pass while 33.3% said they yes, they do.

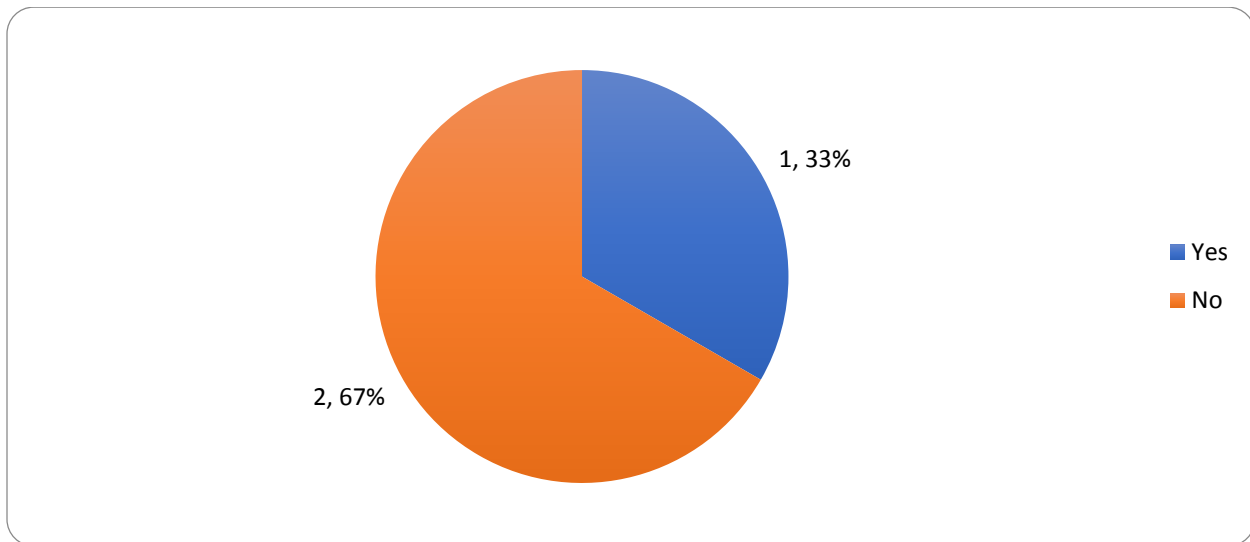


Figure 39. Do you make use of the available Corporate Pass?

Question 1.2

The 20 respondents to question 1 that said their employer does not offer a Corporate Pass were asked a follow up question to determine which of them would participate in the program if it were offered. 55% of respondents said

they would use a Corporate Pass if it were available, 20% said they would not, and 25% said they were not sure if they'd use it.

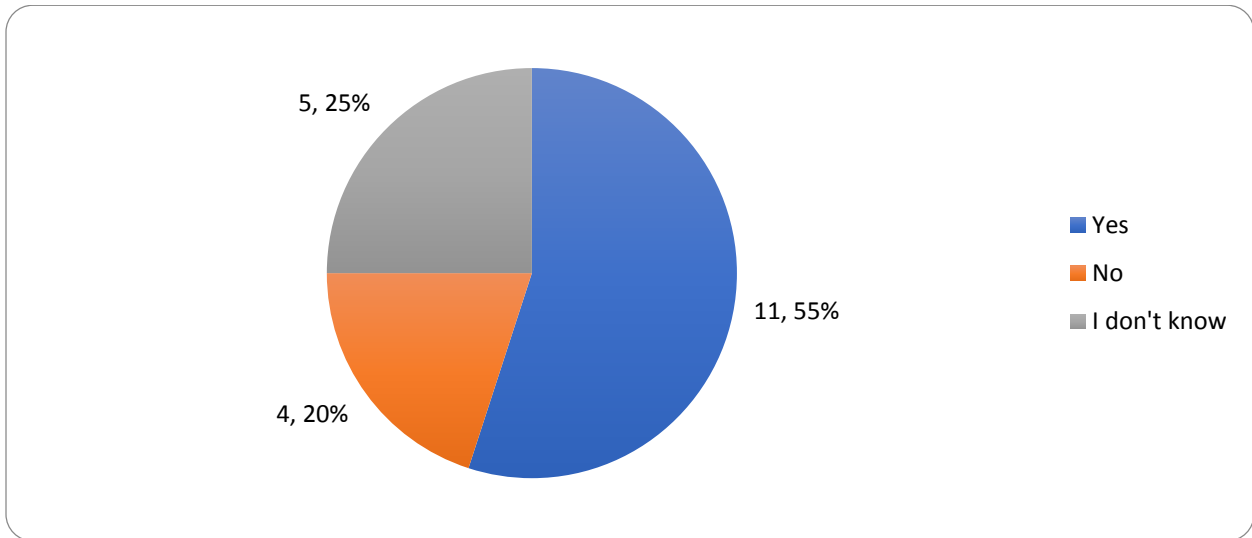


Figure 40. If a Corporate Pass were available, would you make use of it?

Question 2

All respondents were asked about how their level of interest in working for their employer would change if a Corporate Pass were offered. Approximately two thirds (61.5%) of respondents said their interest in working for their employer would be about the same if a Corporate Pass were offered while the remaining third (38.5%) said they would be more interested. None of the respondents said they would be less interested.

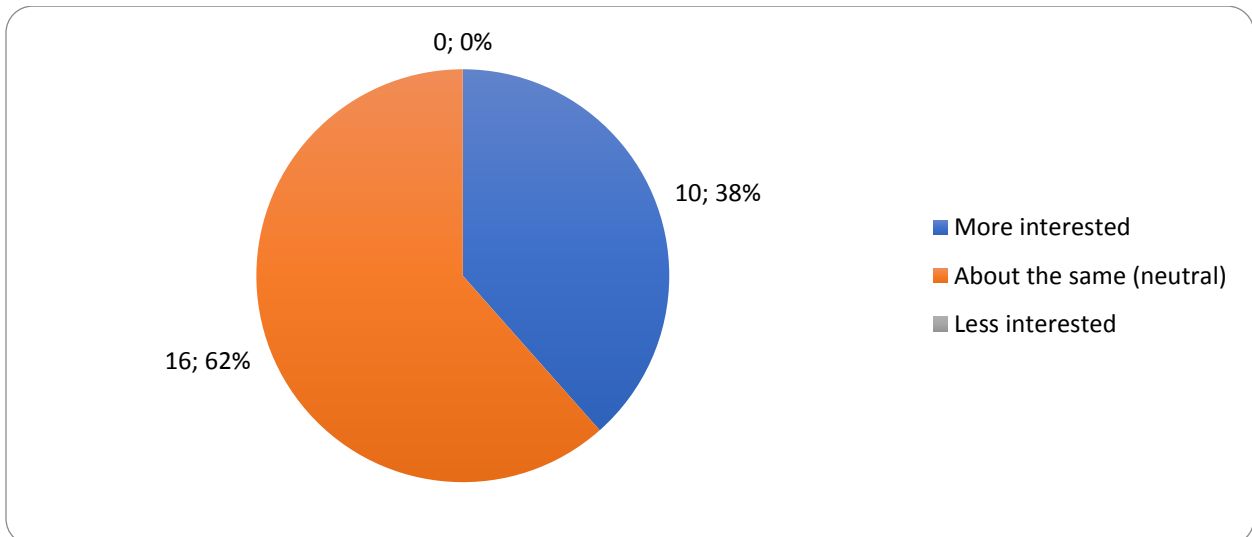


Figure 41. If a Corporate Pass were offered, would it change your interest level in continuing to work for this employer?

Question 3

Respondents were also asked how they usually commute to work. 69.6% said they usually drive alone, 17.4% said they usually use some form of active transportation, and 13.0% said they usually take public transit. None of the respondents said they usually carpool or take a taxi, Uber, or similar car for hire.

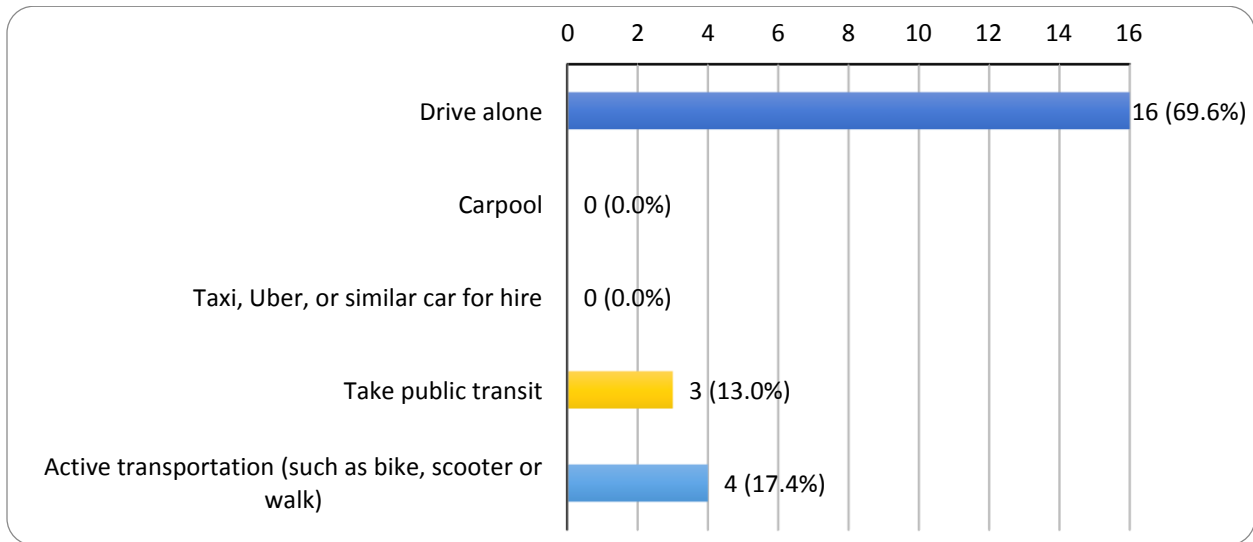


Figure 42. How do you usually commute to work?

Question 4

All respondents were asked how much money they spend on commuting to work monthly. 31.8% of respondents said they spend between \$50 to \$79 on their monthly commute. 22.7% said they spend \$100 to \$149, 13.6% said they spend less than \$50, and another 13.6% said they spend \$80 to \$99 monthly. 9.1% said they spend \$200 to \$249, 4.5% said they spend \$300 or more, and the remaining 4.5% said they did not know how much they spend monthly.

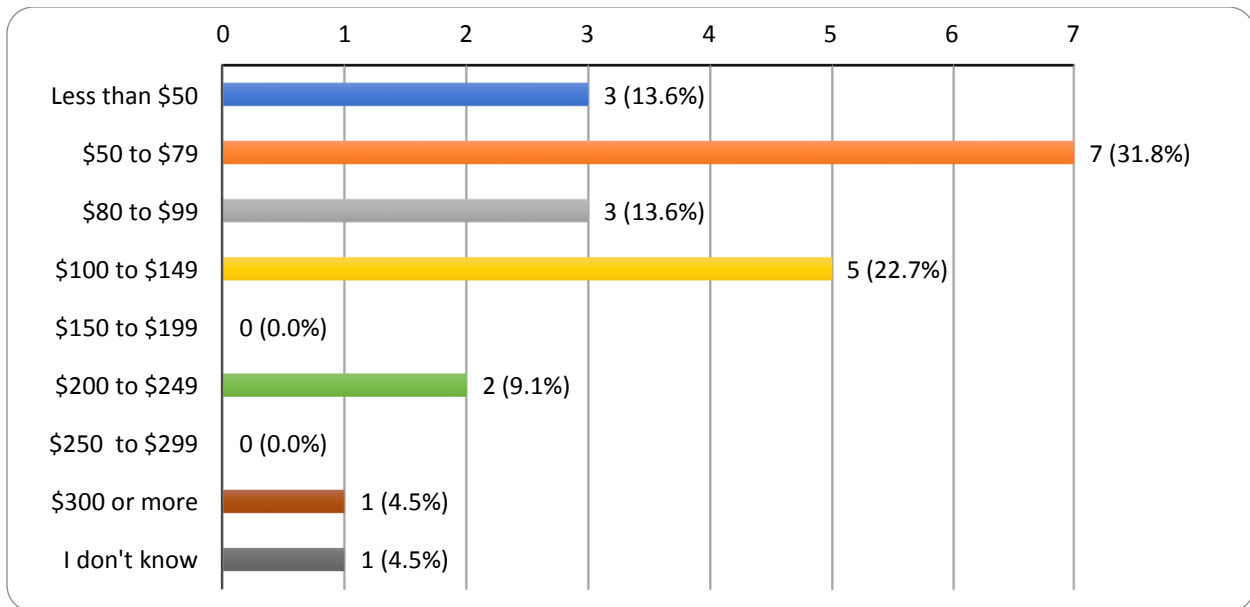


Figure 43. How much does your current work commute cost per month?

Online reload satisfaction survey

There were 60 responses to this survey that were all completed online at haveyoursay.guelph.ca.

Question 1

Respondents were asked to rank their experience with reloading their OnYourWay card online through four questions.

Question 1.1

Respondents were asked to rank their experience with how quick it is to reload their OnYourWay card online. 41.7% said it meets their expectations, 26.7% said it is significantly above their expectations, and 11.7% said it is somewhat above their expectations. The remaining 11.7% and 8.3% said it is significantly below their expectations and somewhat below their expectations, respectively.

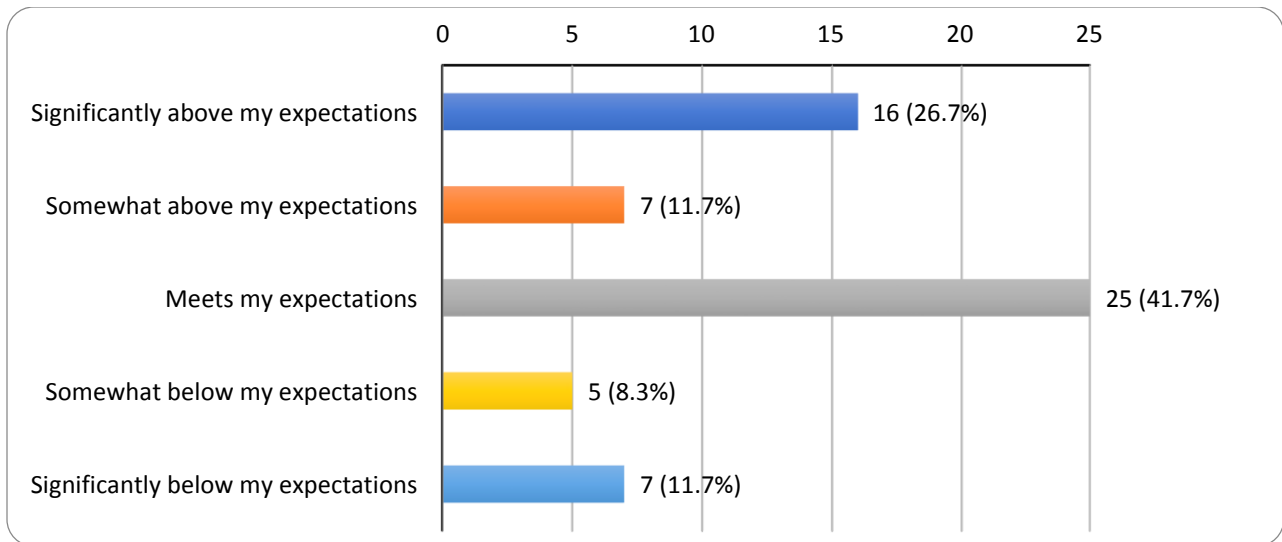


Figure 44. How quick is it to reload?

Question 1.2

Respondents were asked to rank their experience with how easy it is to reload their OnYourWay card online. 36.7% said it meets their expectations, 25.0% said it is significantly above their expectations, and 10.0% said it is somewhat above their expectations. The remaining 15.0% and 13.3% said it is significantly below their expectations and somewhat below their expectations, respectively.

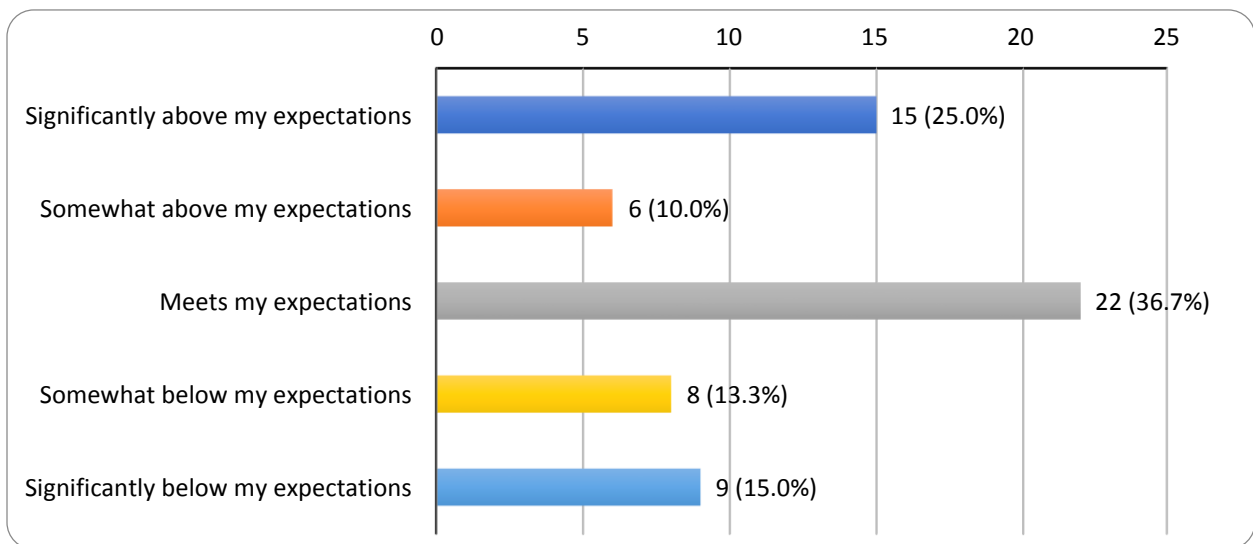


Figure 45. How easy is it to reload?

Question 1.3

Respondents were asked to rank their experience with how clear the instructions are to reload their OnYourWay card online. 40.0% said it meets

their expectations, 21.7% said it is significantly above their expectations, and 10.0% said it is somewhat above their expectations. The remaining 18.3% and 10.0% said it is somewhat below their expectations and significantly below their expectations, respectively.

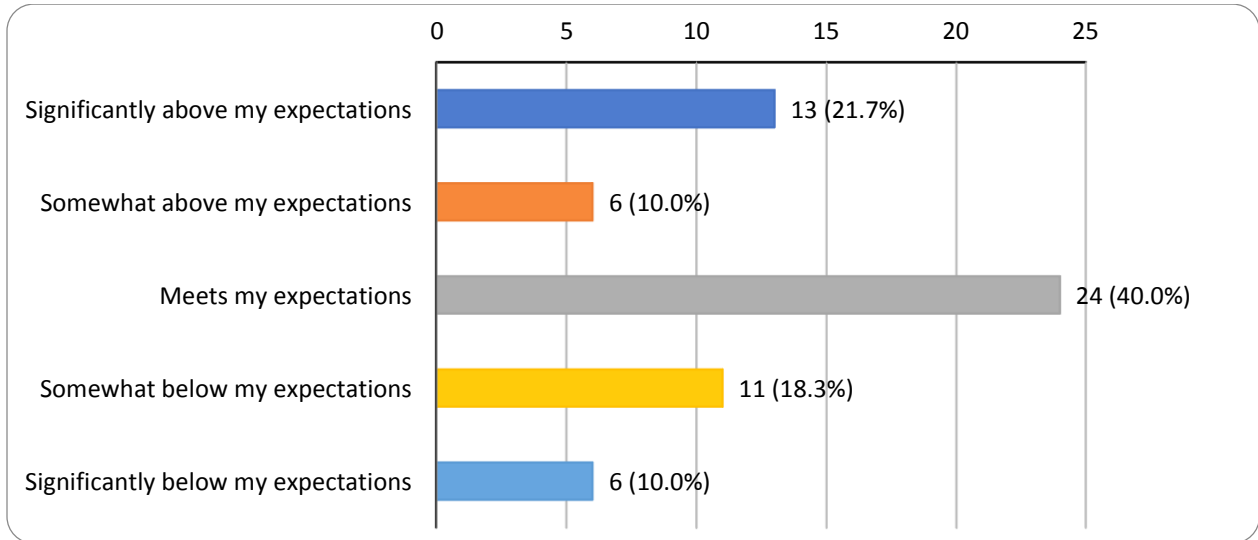


Figure 46. How clear are the instructions?

Question 1.4

Respondents were asked to rank their experience with how convenient it is to reload their OnYourWay card online. 30.0% said it meets their expectations, 33.3% said it is significantly above their expectations, and 13.3% said it is somewhat above their expectations. The remaining 11.7% and 11.7% said it is somewhat below their expectations and significantly below their expectations, respectively.

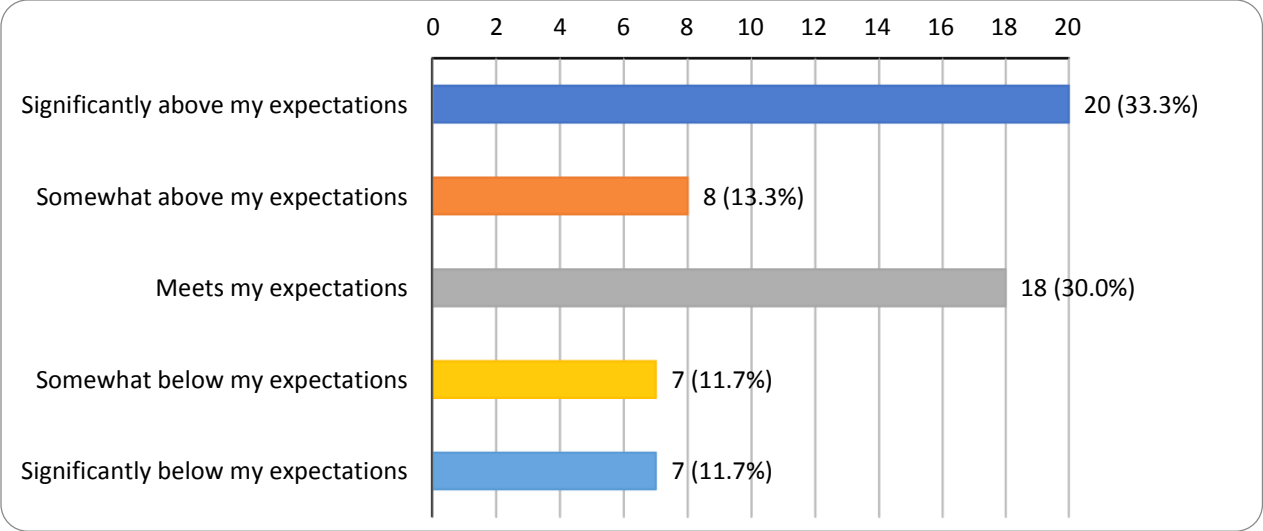


Figure 47. How convenient is it to reload online?

Question 2

Respondents were asked an open-ended question on how the experience of reloading their OnYourWay card could be improved. Of the 52% of respondents that answered this question, 34.6% said that no improvements are needed. 23.1% said the reloading experience could be improved by fixing technical issues and 19.2% said the website could be made easier to navigate. Another 11.5% said the accounts for the OnYourWay card and mobile app could be linked and the remaining 11.5% said clearer instructions could be provided to improve overall experience.

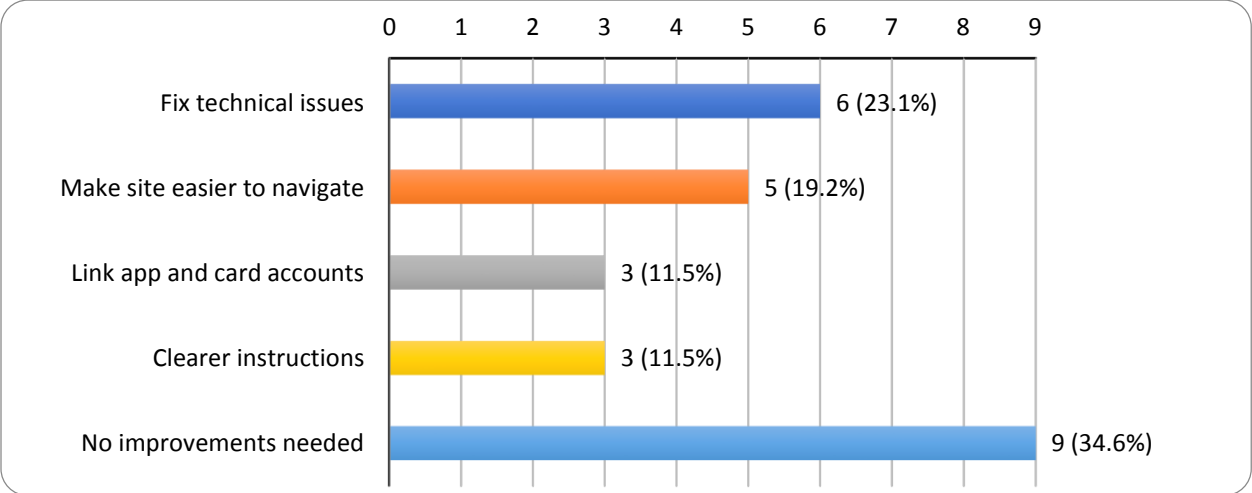


Figure 48. How can we improve your experience reloading your OnYourWay card online?

High school student discount pass survey

There were 125 responses to this survey that were completed online at haveyoursay.guelph.ca.

Question 1

Respondents were asked how many youths aged 13-18 they make transit decisions for. Over half (54.4%) of respondents said they make transit decisions for one youth, and one third (32.8%) said they make transit decisions for two youths. Another 6.4% said they make transit decisions for three youths, 1.6% said they make transit decisions for four or more youths, and the remaining 4.8% said they do not make transit decisions for any youths.

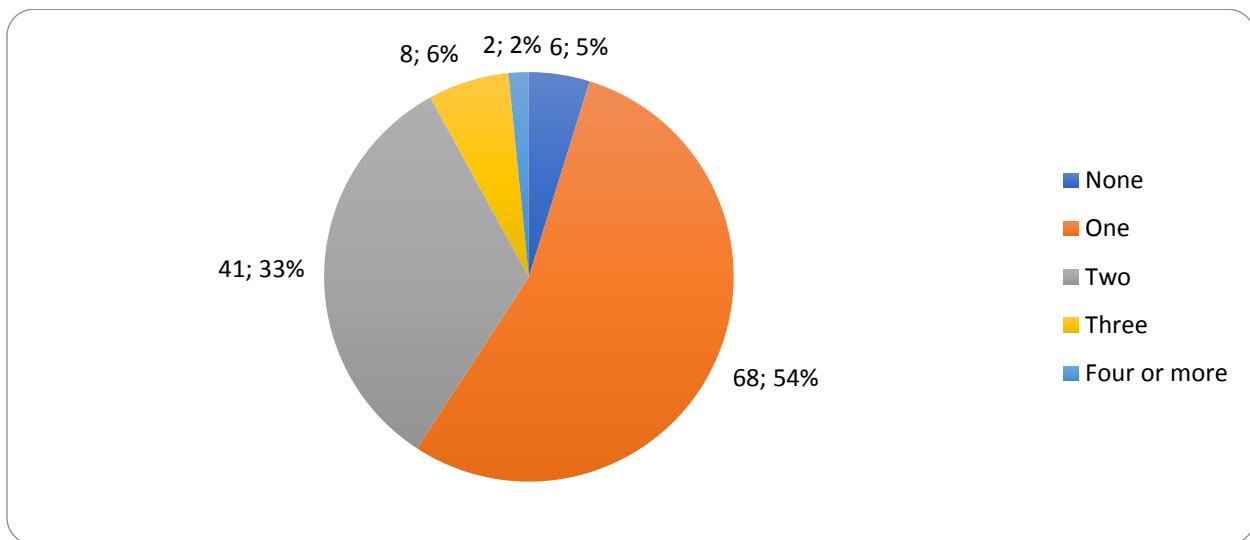


Figure 49. How many youths aged 13-18 (including yourself if applicable) do you make transit decisions for?

Question 2

Respondents were then asked how many of the youth in their household take transit to school. 44.5% said one youth takes transit to school, 17.6% said two youths, 4.3% said three youths, and 3.4% said four or more youths. The remaining 30.3% said none of the youth in their household take transit to school.

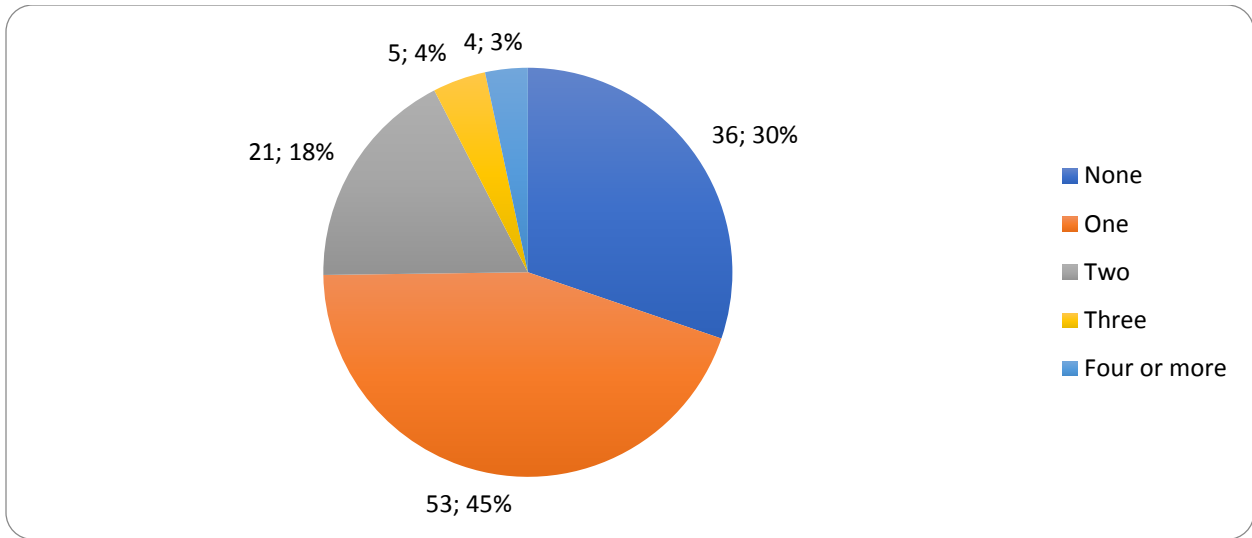


Figure 50. How many of the youth in your household currently take transit (City bus) to school? (At least a few times each month)

Question 3

Of those youth that take transit to school, respondents were asked how many of them use a monthly pass. 32.2% said one youth in their household uses a monthly pass, 6.1% said two youths, 2.6% said three youths, and 2.6% said four or more youths. The remaining 56.5% said none of the youths in their household use a monthly pass.

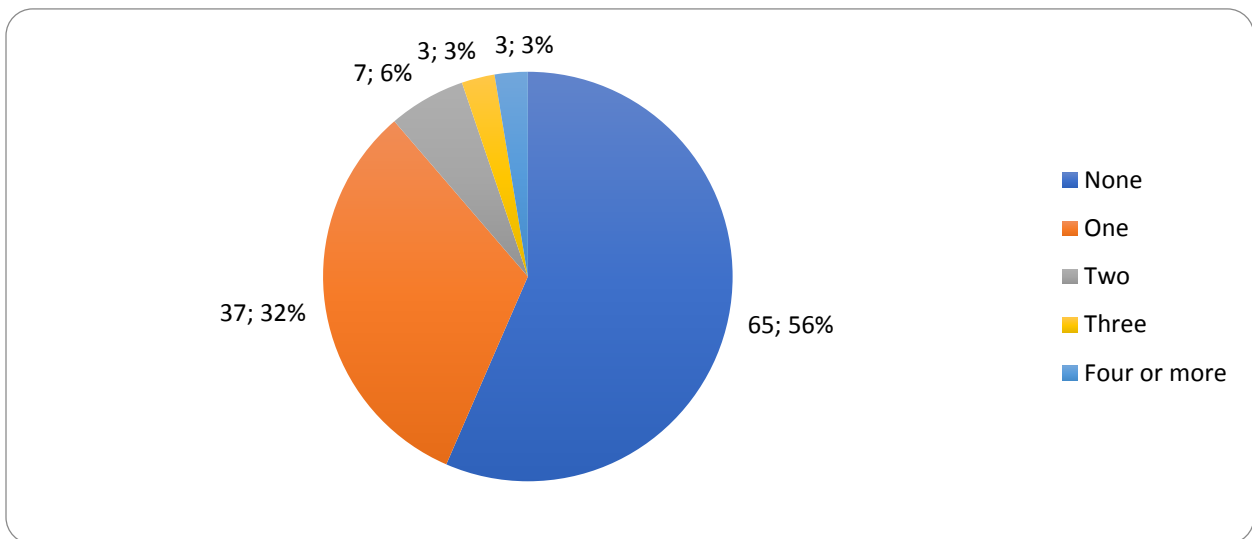


Figure 51. Of the youth in your household who do take transit, how many use a monthly pass (rather than pay-per-use fares such as cash or e-rides)?

Question 4

Respondents were asked how likely they are to switch to a five-month semester pass that is paid up front but offers a better discount than the monthly pass, if it were offered. 59.3% said they would be very likely to switch to the semester pass, 24.4% said they would be somewhat likely to switch to the semester pass, and 3.3% said they were not very likely to switch to the semester pass. The remaining 13.0% were unsure if they would switch to a semester pass.

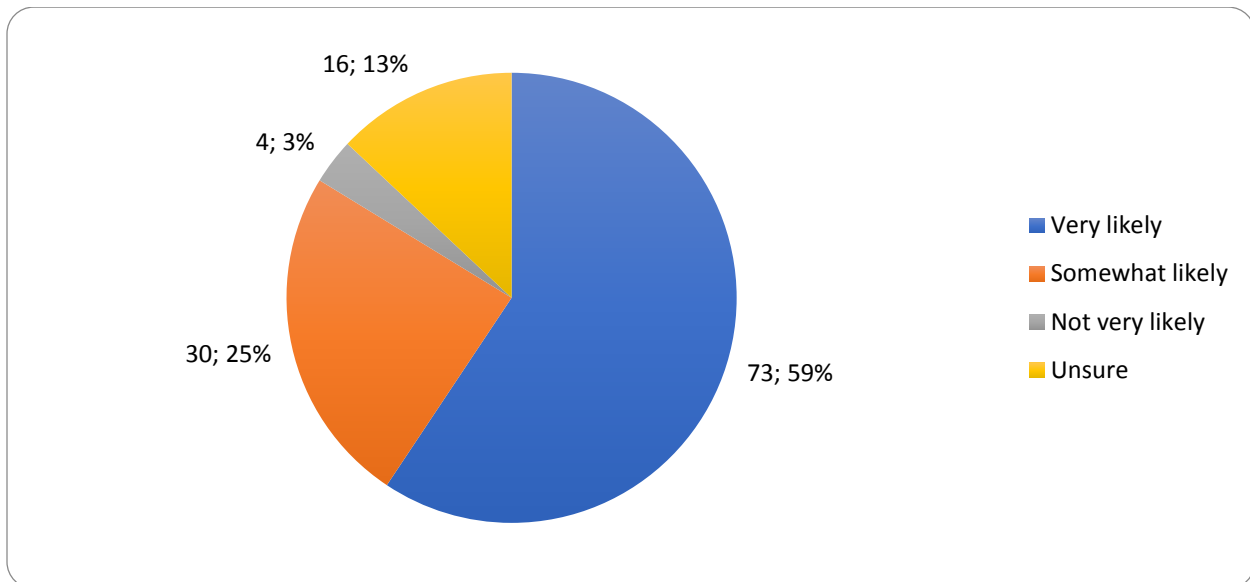


Figure 52. How likely would you be to switch to a semester pass for some, or all, of the youth in your household?

Question 5

Respondents were asked an open-ended question on why or why not they would be interested in a semester pass. The responses were grouped into similar categories. 26.3% said they would be interested if the semester pass were an affordable price, and 24.2% said they would be interested if the discount were large enough to provide significant cost savings. Another 18.2% were generally interested in the semester pass program. 13.1% were interested in the semester pass program because of the convenience of not having to reload monthly passes. 9.1% were interested due to the increased independence a semester pass would give youth and 1.0% were interested because they believed this would encourage transit use among youth. 6.1% were not interested because the youth in their household do not use transit enough for purchasing a semester pass to make sense. 2.0% would only be interested if instead of paying for five months up front, they could split the payment into increments.

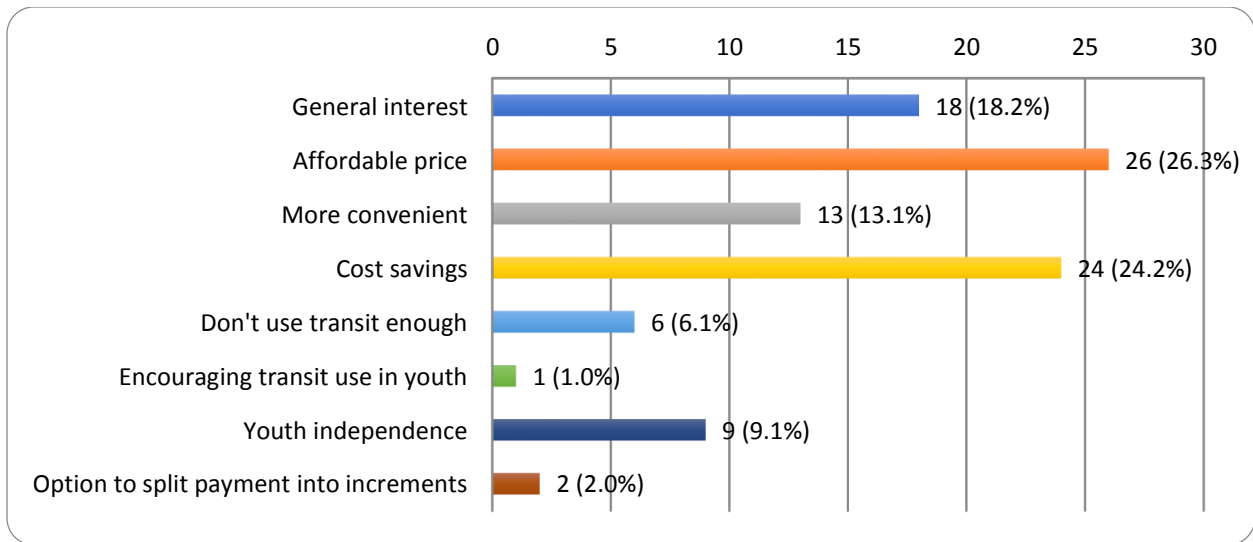


Figure 53. Please let us know why you would or would not be interested in a semester pass.

Question 6

Similarly, respondents were asked how likely they would be to purchase a two-month youth summer pass for July and August if it were a “buy one month, get one month free” deal. 59.3% of respondents said they would be very likely to purchase the summer pass for youth in their household, and 24.4% said they would be somewhat likely to purchase the summer pass. 3.3% said it is not very likely they would purchase the summer pass. The remaining 13.0% said they were unsure if they would purchase a summer pass.

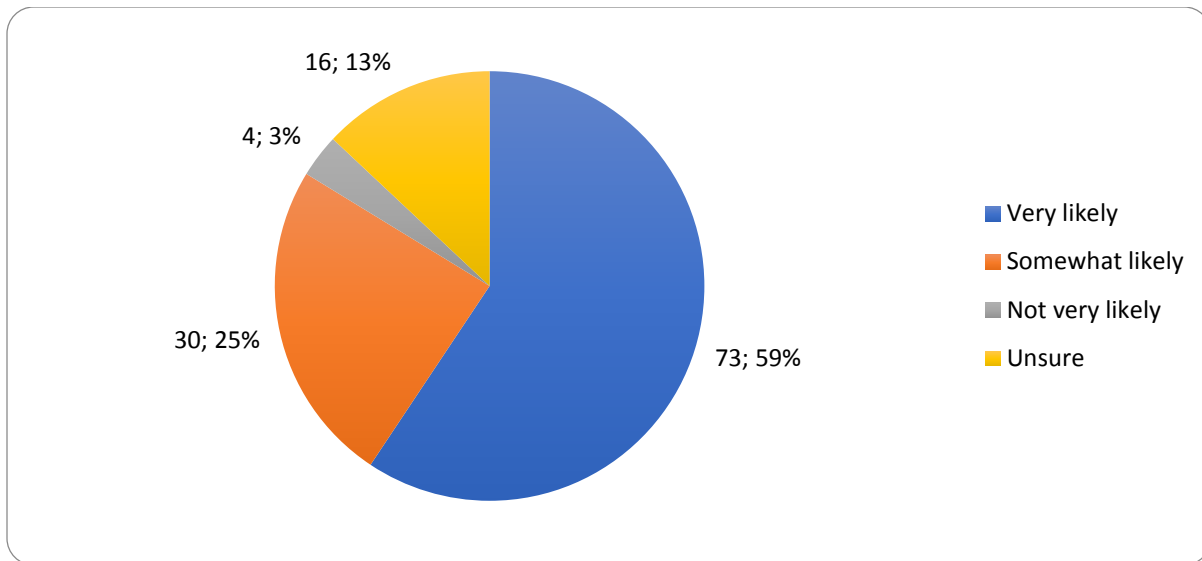


Figure 54. How likely would you be to purchase a summer pass for some or all the youth in your household?

Question 7

Respondents were asked an open-ended question on why or why not they would be interested in a summer pass. The responses were grouped into similar categories. 17.2% said they are interested because the summer pass is an affordable price, and another 17.2% said they were interested due to the increased independence a summer pass would give youth. 11.1% were generally interested in the summer pass program. 7.1% said they were interested due to the convenience of not having to reload monthly passes, and an additional 7.1% said they were interested due to cost savings the summer pass provides. 3.0% were interested because they believed this would encourage transit use among youth. 9.1% said they were not interested because the youth in their household do not use transit enough for purchasing a summer pass to make sense. Another 9.1% said they were not sure if they would purchase a summer pass for their youth as it would depend on their summer plans.

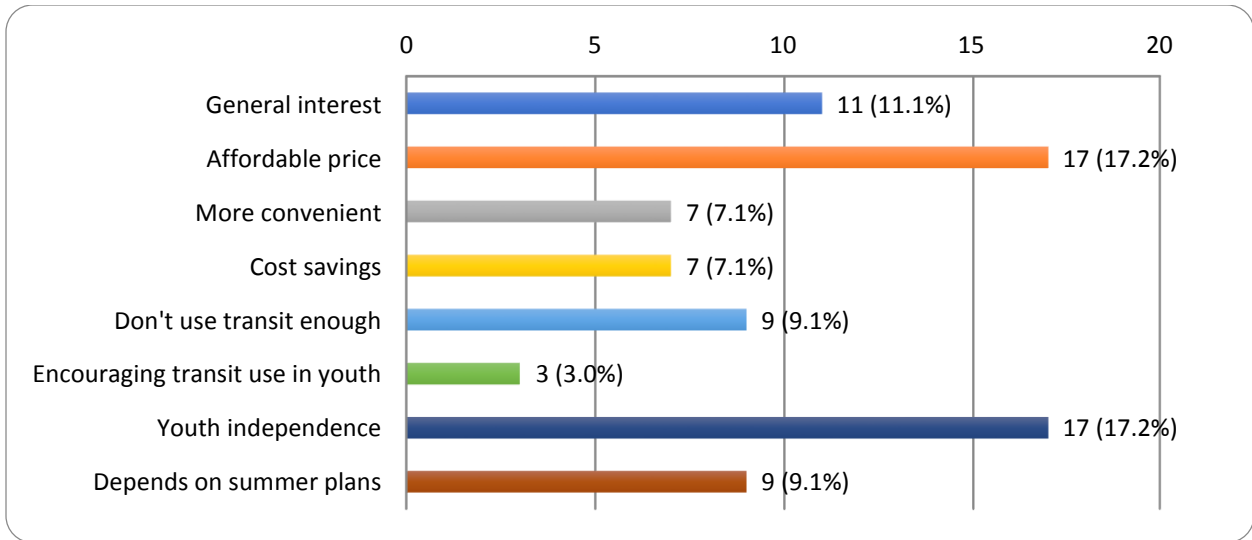


Figure 55. Please let us know why you would or would not be interested in a summer pass.

4.3 Open house and intercept responses

Intercept Boards

Fare pricing options

The fare pricing options intercept board asked participants what options they would like to have when paying on the bus in the future. 47 people said cash, 137 said OnYourWay card, 47 said mobile app, and 113 said tap to pay using debit, credit, android pay, or apply pay.

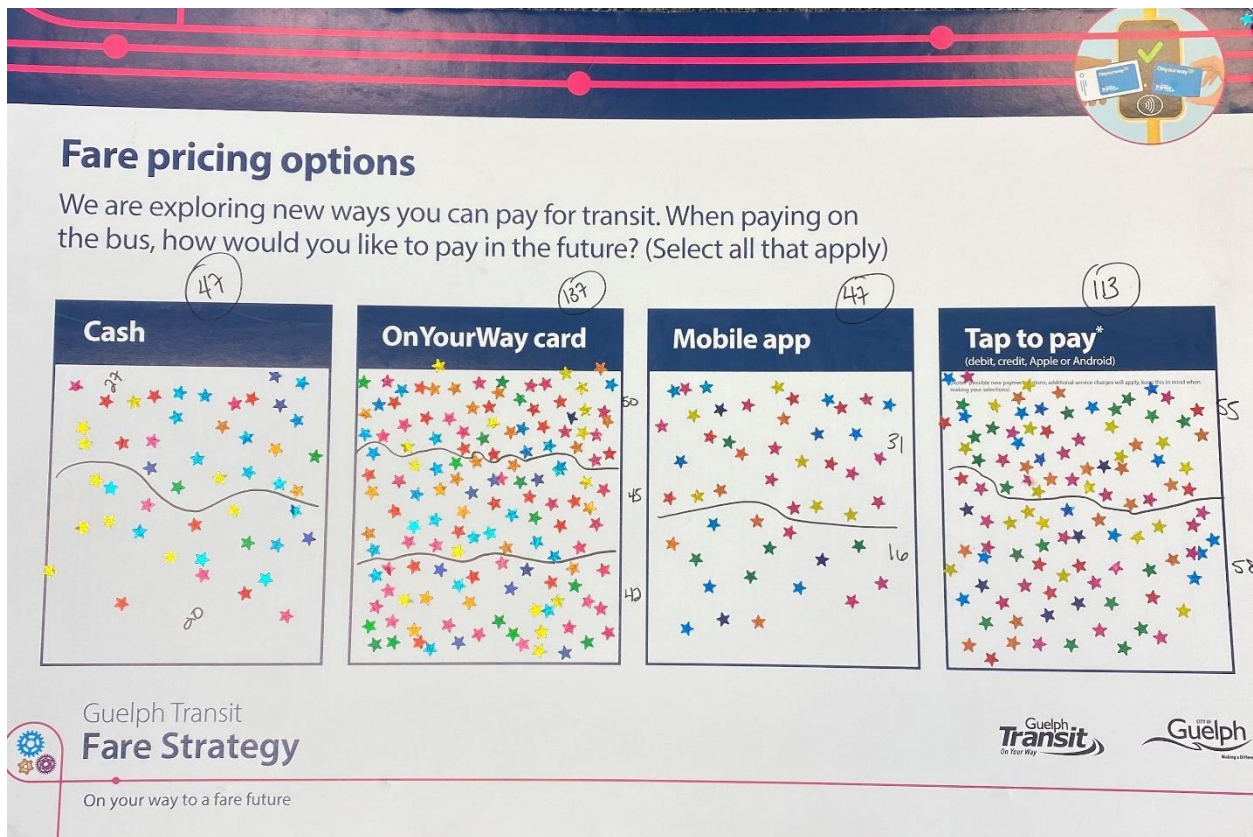


Figure 56. Image of the fare pricing options intercept board.

Fare policy and structure

There were two fare policy and structure intercept boards. The first asked participants how they would like to see changes made to fares. 112 people said they prefer minor changes every year as required to keep up with expenses while 55 people said they would prefer one larger change every several years.

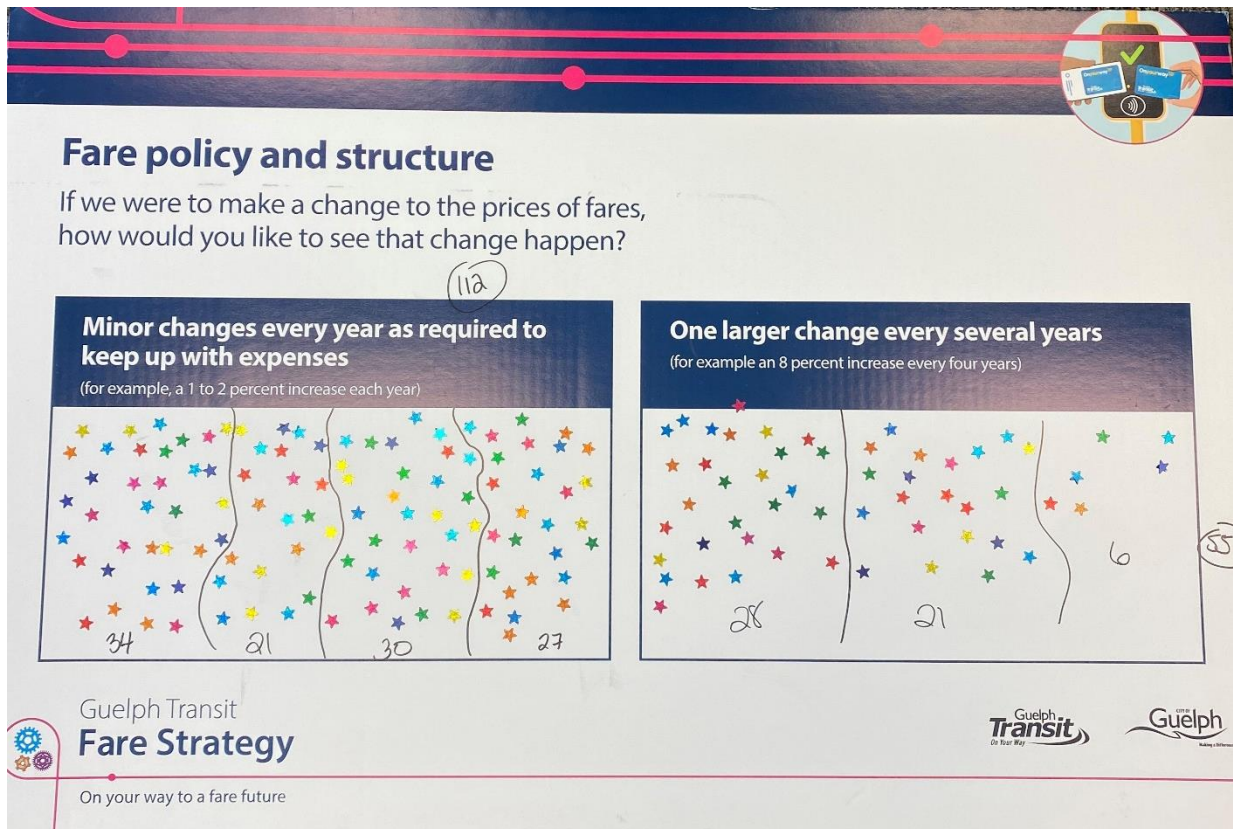


Figure 57. Image of the fare policy and structure intercept board that asks about fare changes.

The second fare policy and structure intercept board asked participants what kind of fare structure makes the most sense to them. 53 people said age-based fares, which is the current system, and 26 people said one fare for everyone, plus the affordable bus pass program, which is also known as income-based fares.

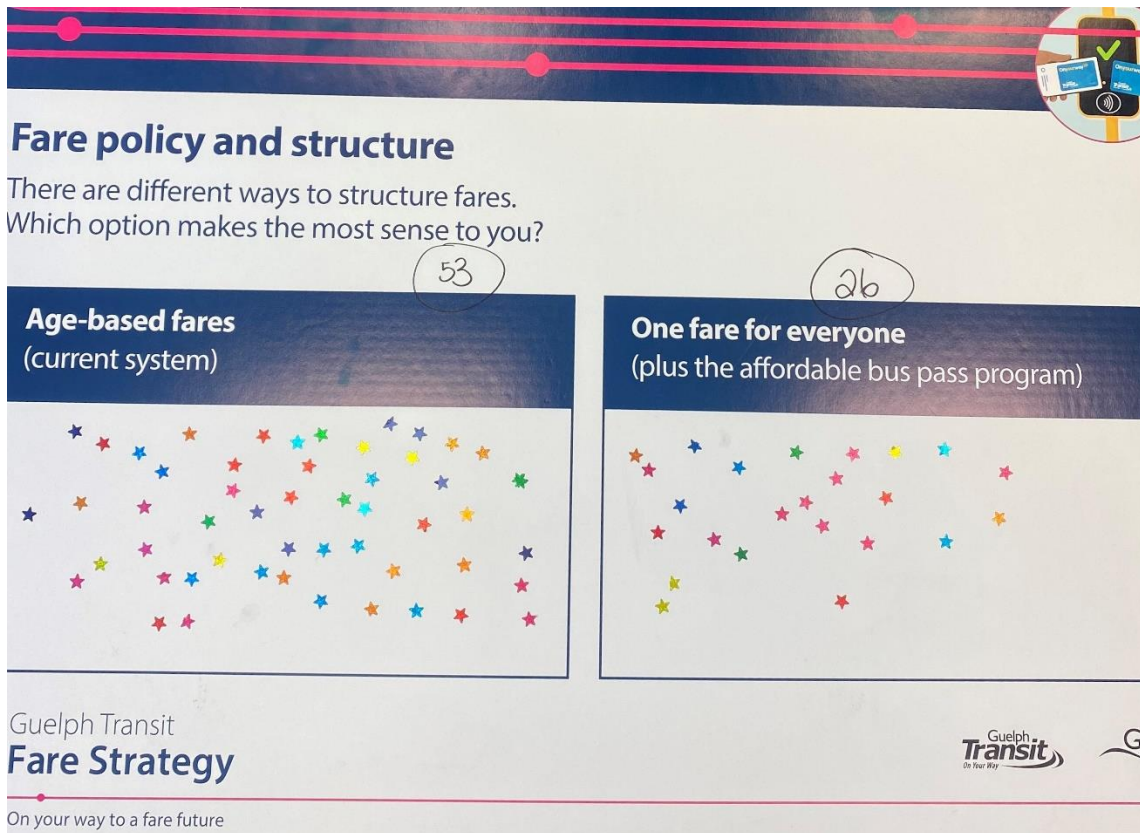


Figure 58. Image of the fare policy and structure intercept board that asks about fare structure.

Fare programs

There were two fare programs intercept boards. The first asked participants about what kind of monthly pass they would prefer. 53 people said they prefer the current monthly pass where they pay up front for the whole calendar month. 58 people said they prefer a rolling monthly pass where they pay up front for a pass that expires one month from the date of purchase. 90 people said they prefer a loyalty program where they pay a regular fare every time they get on the bus and after paying a set number of times, they ride free for the rest of the calendar month.

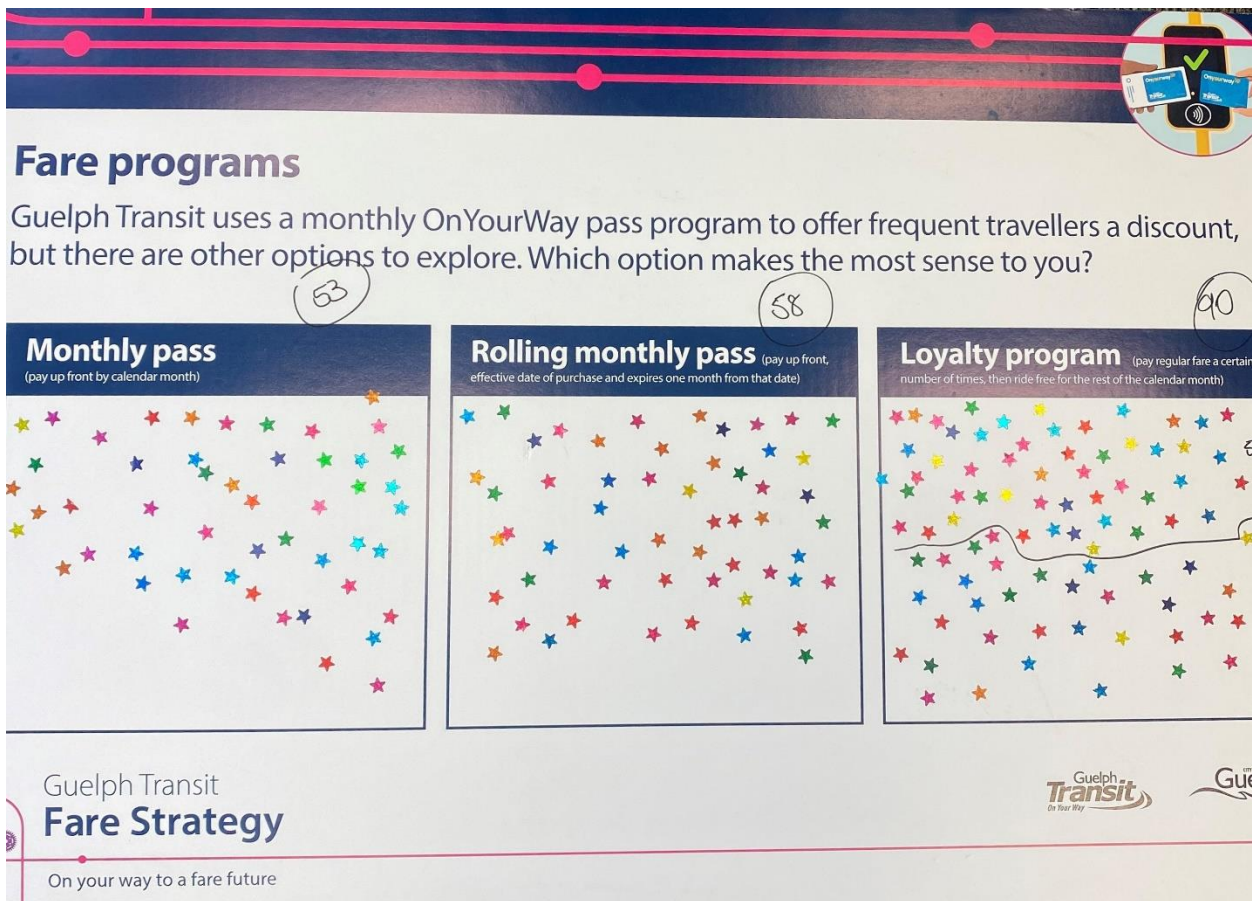


Figure 59. Image of the fare programs intercept board that asks about monthly passes.

The second fare programs intercept board asked participants which discounted fare programs they believe are the most important to offer. 114 people said kids aged 5-12 ride free permanently. 70 people said a youth summer (2 month) pass program. 74 people said a high school semester (5 month) pass program. 98 people said seniors ride free one day a month. 69 people said a Corporate Pass program where businesses partner with Transit to offer discounted passes to employees.

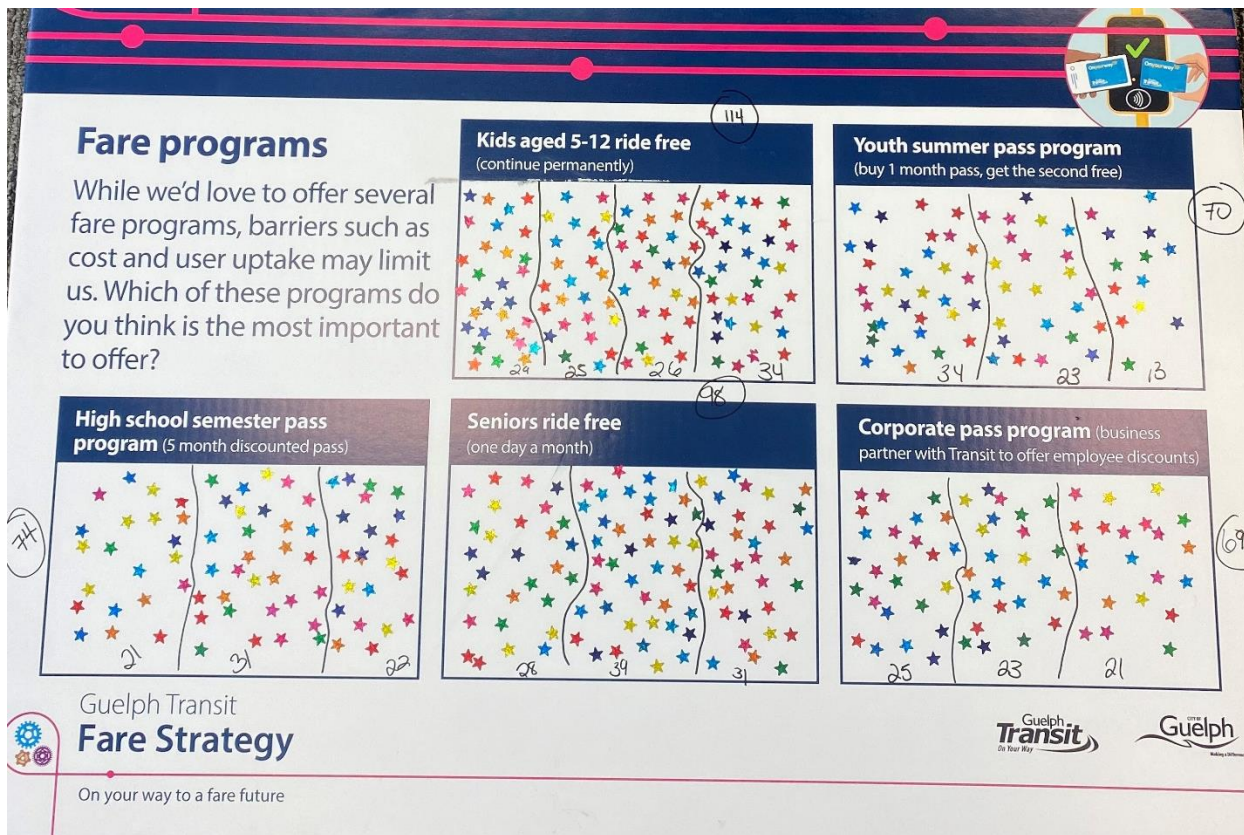


Figure 60. Image of the fare programs intercept board that asks about discounted fare program offerings.

Feedback and comments

At the open houses, community members had the opportunity to talk with staff about the Fare Strategy, which resulted in additional comments and feedback being collected.

Four participants mentioned that seniors should ride free once a week rather than once a month. Similarly, 2 participants said seniors should ride free on weekdays during the midday period (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.). Another 2 participants were in favour of a loyalty program, but believed it should be 'ride ten times, get one ride free.' Two participants wanted the free rides to Guelph Storm hockey games at the Sleeman Centre reintroduced, which has been reinstated for the 2022-2023 season. One participant was in favour of continuing the Kids Ride Free program permanently but believed it should be for kids aged 17 and under. Another participant was in favour of corporate sponsorships to fund ride free programs but suggested that buses or stops be named after companies. One participant suggested having ride free days for everyone to encourage new riders to try taking transit and another participant mentioned that transfers should be longer than 60 minutes.

4.4 Virtual workshops

Mentimeter results

Results from all three workshops were combined for analysis.

Question 1

Participants were asked what goals should be included in the Fare Strategy and could provide more than one answer. Responses that were unrelated to the Fare Strategy have been excluded.

23.1% of participants said affordability should be a goal of the Fare Strategy. 11.5% said accessibility should be a goal and another 11.5% said it should be economic. 7.7% said the fare system should be easy to use and another 7.7% said it should benefit seniors. 3.8% each said the goals should include equity, fairness, diversity, inclusion, transparency, reliability, user-friendly, clear communication, ease of payment, and increasing child ridership.

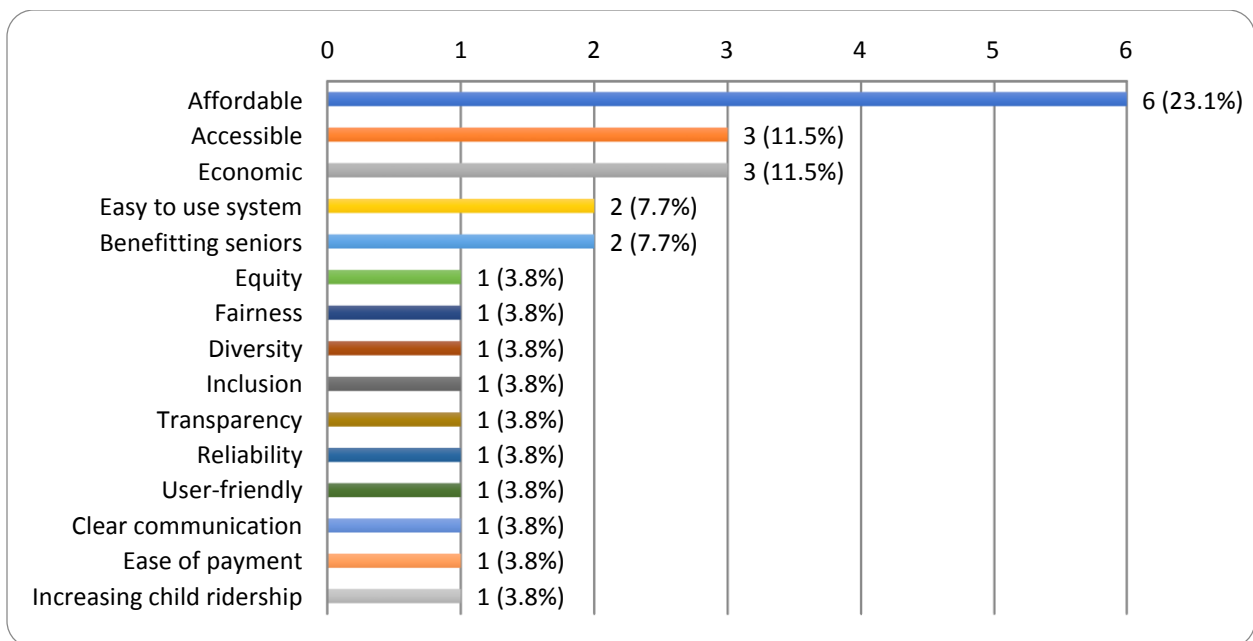


Figure 61. What should the goals for the Transit Fare Strategy include?

Question 2

Participants were asked how they would like to pay on the bus in the future and were able to select multiple options. 22.7% of participants said they would like to pay using a debit or credit card and 16.7% said they would like to pay using their OnYourWay card. Additionally, 16.7% said they would like to pay using Android Pay and another 16.7% said they would like to pay using Apply Pay. 13.6% said they would like to pay using the mobile app

and 7.6% said they would like to pay using cash. The remaining 6.1% said they would like to pay using another method of payment.

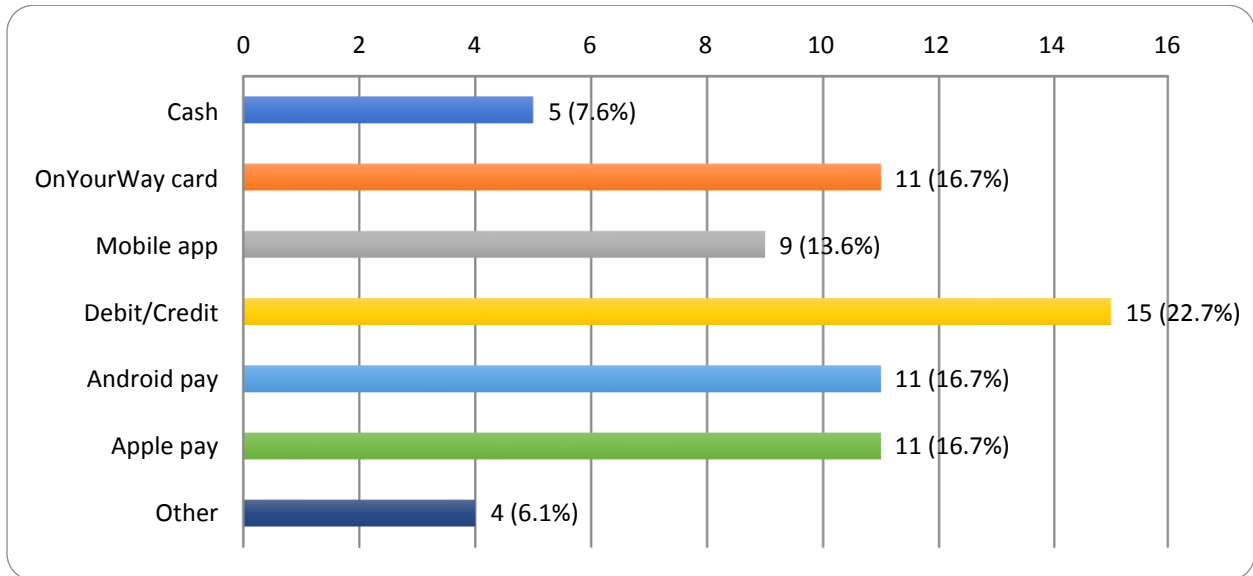


Figure 62. When paying on the bus, how would you like to pay in the future?

Question 3

Participants were told that there may be an additional fee for paying with debit card, credit card, Android Pay and Apple Pay. They were then asked to answer the same question to see if their desired payment choices had changed. This time around, 24.6% of participants said they would like to pay using a debit or credit card and 19.7% said they would like to pay using their OnYourWay card. Additionally, 14.8% said they would like to pay using Android Pay and another 13.1% said they would like to pay using Apple Pay. 14.8% said they would like to pay using the mobile app and 8.2% said they would like to pay using cash. The remaining 4.9% said they would like to pay using another method of payment.

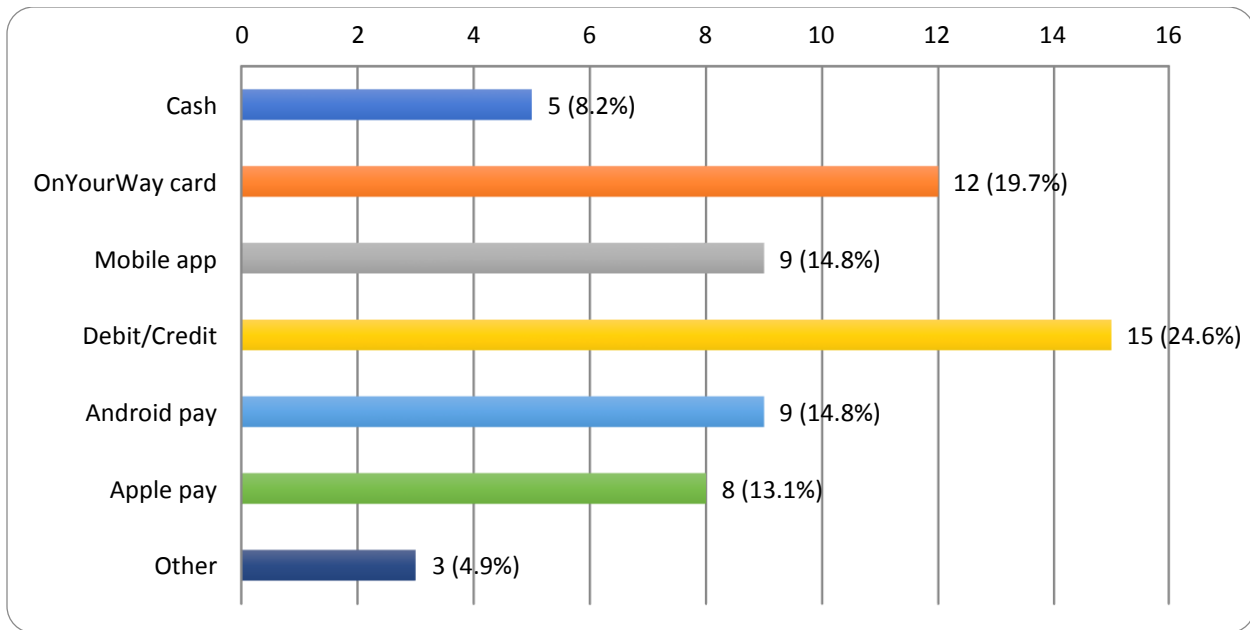


Figure 63. Let's try this again. Has anything changed? How would you like to pay on the bus in the future?

Question 4

Participants were told about the three types of frequent rider programs Guelph Transit is looking into and were then asked which program they felt makes the most sense for Guelph. 52.9% of participants said a loyalty program where free rides are given after paying for a certain number of rides each month is the best fit for Guelph. 47.1% said a rolling monthly pass where the monthly pass becomes effective on the date of purchase makes the most sense for Guelph. None of the participants felt that the current monthly pass that is active for a full calendar month is the best fit for Guelph.

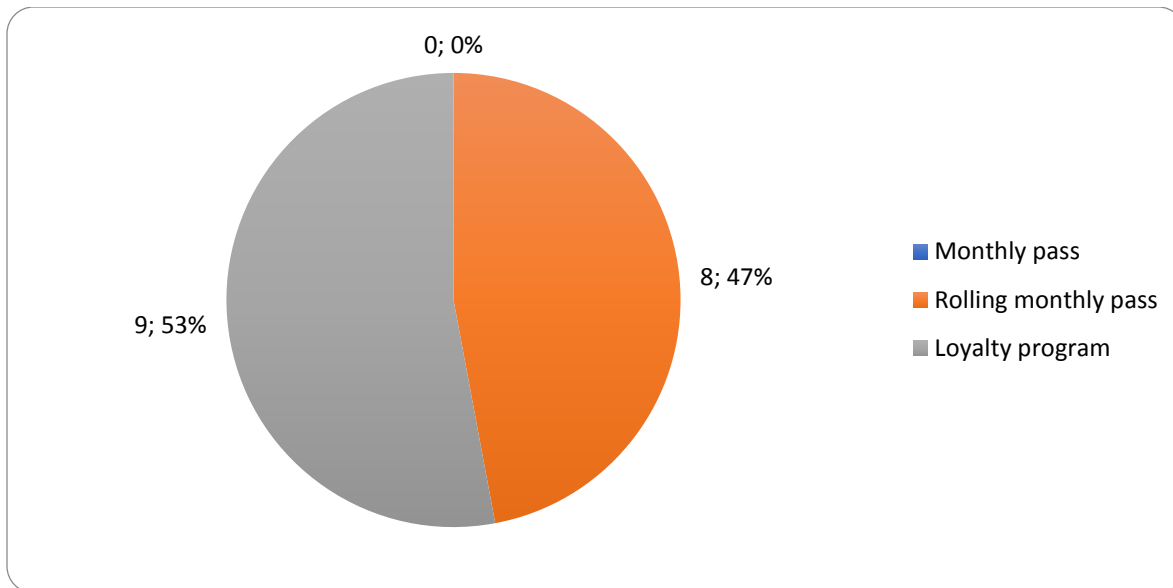


Figure 64. Which frequent rider program makes the most sense for Guelph?

Question 5

Four different fare programs were explained to participants, then they were asked to rank the programs based on which programs are the most and least important to them, with 1 being most important and 4 being least important.

When asked to rank the Kids Ride Free program where kids aged 12 and under would ride for free every day, 41.2% of participants ranked this program number 1. 29.4% ranked the Kids Ride Free program number 2, 17.6% ranked this program number 3, and 11.8% ranked this program number 4.

Participants were asked to rank the Seniors Ride Free program as well in which one day a month, aligning with a seniors’ discount day, seniors could ride free. 0% of participants ranked this program number 1, but 29.4% ranked this program number 2. 23.5% ranked the Seniors Ride Free program as number 3 and 47.1% ranked this program as number 4.

The Corporate Pass program, where Guelph Transit works with employers to match discounted monthly passes for employees, was ranked number 1 by 61.1% of participants. 22.2% of participants ranked the Corporate Pass program number 2, and 16.7% ranked this program number 3. None of the participants ranked this program number 4.

A program offering schools group discounts for student field trips was not ranked number 1 by any participants. 17.2% of participants ranked this

program number 2. 41.2% ranked this program number 3, and another 41.2% ranked this program number 4.

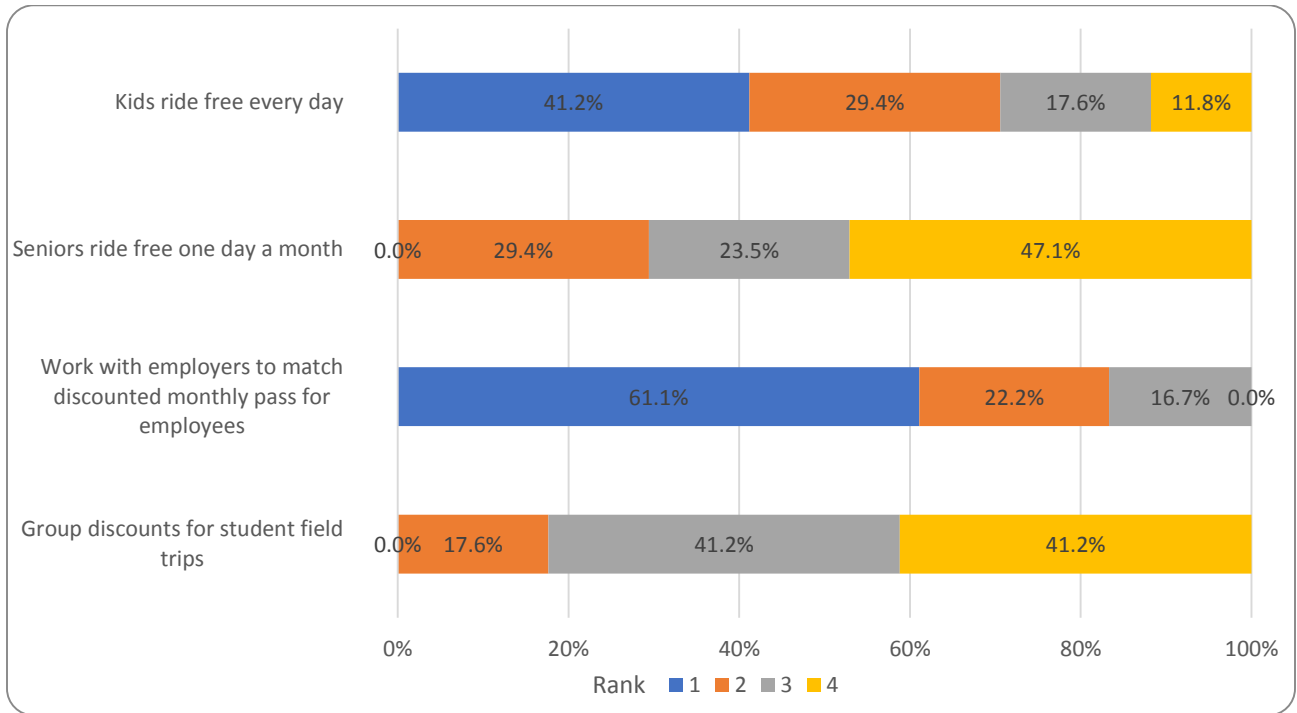


Figure 65. Rank these discounted programs in order of preference.

Question 6

It was explained to participants that discounted and free fare programs must be paid for in some way. They were then asked how these programs should be funded. 47.1% of participants said transit fares should be increased to fund free and discounted fare programs while 29.4% said taxes should be increased to fund these programs instead. Another 23.5% said other methods of funding these programs should be considered.

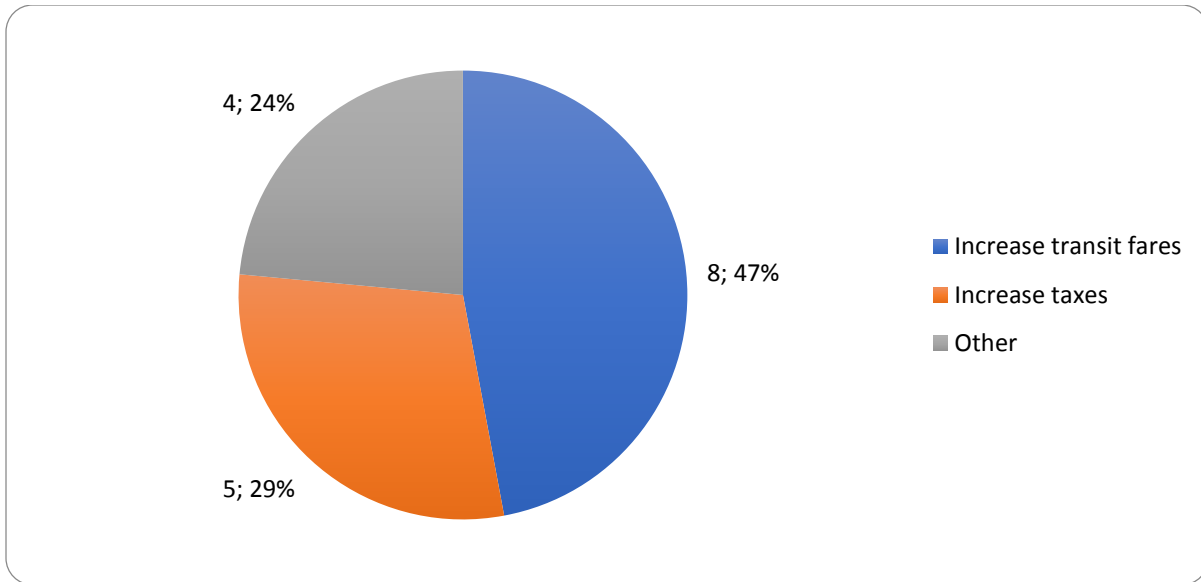


Figure 66. Which kind of funding should we explore to cover costs of free and discounted fares?

Question 7

All participants were asked to brainstorm other ideas of funding free and discounted fare programs. 25.0% of participants said Guelph Transit should investigate corporate sponsorships and 18.8% said to explore using Gas Tax funding. 12.5% said to explore government grant opportunities, another 12.5% said to investigate using parking revenue, and an additional 12.5% said to find ways to increase ridership in order to increase revenue. 6.3% said to explore using a combination of increasing taxes and increasing fares to fund these programs, an additional 6.3% said to investigate using tourism tax revenue, and another 6.3% said the City should explore introducing a tax on multi-vehicle households so Transit can use the revenue.

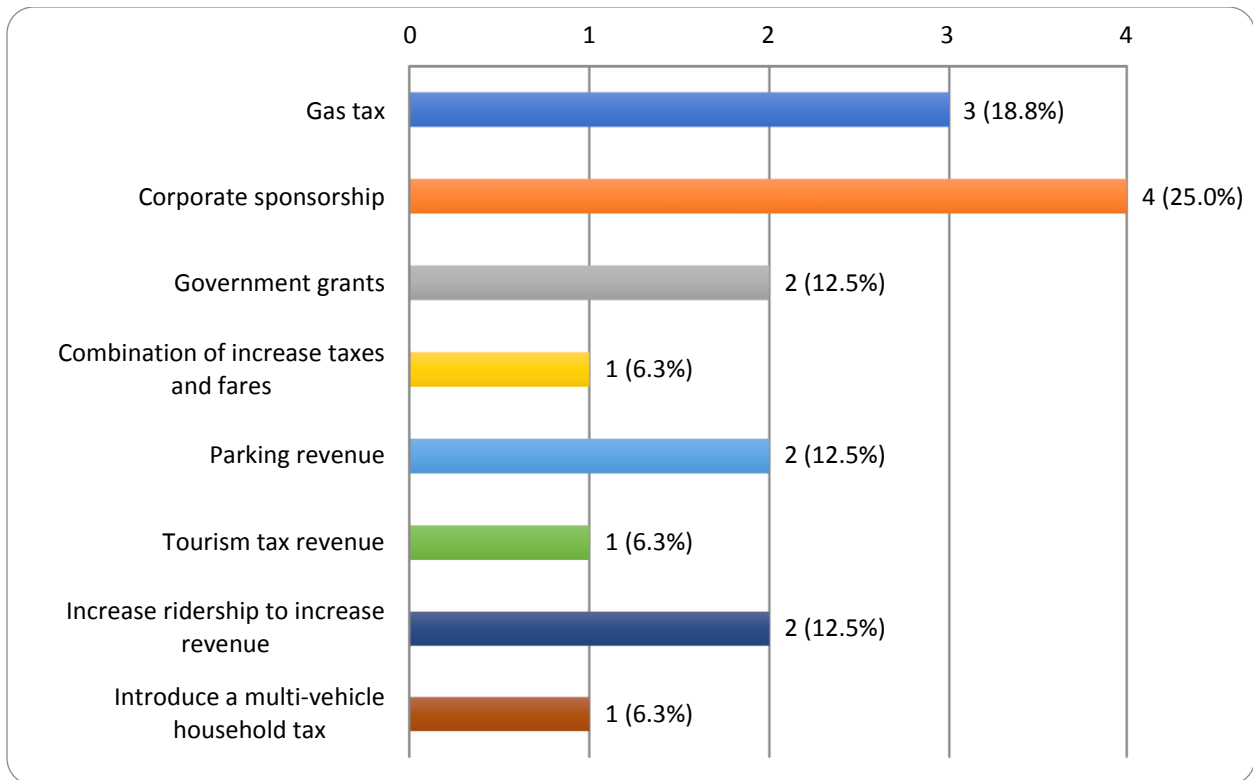


Figure 67. Are there other funding models we should explore?

Question 8

It was explained to participants that changes to fares would likely need to happen at some point in time. They were then asked how they would like to see changes to fares happen. 64.7% of participants said they would prefer to have one larger change every several years while 35.3% said they would prefer smaller changes every year as required.

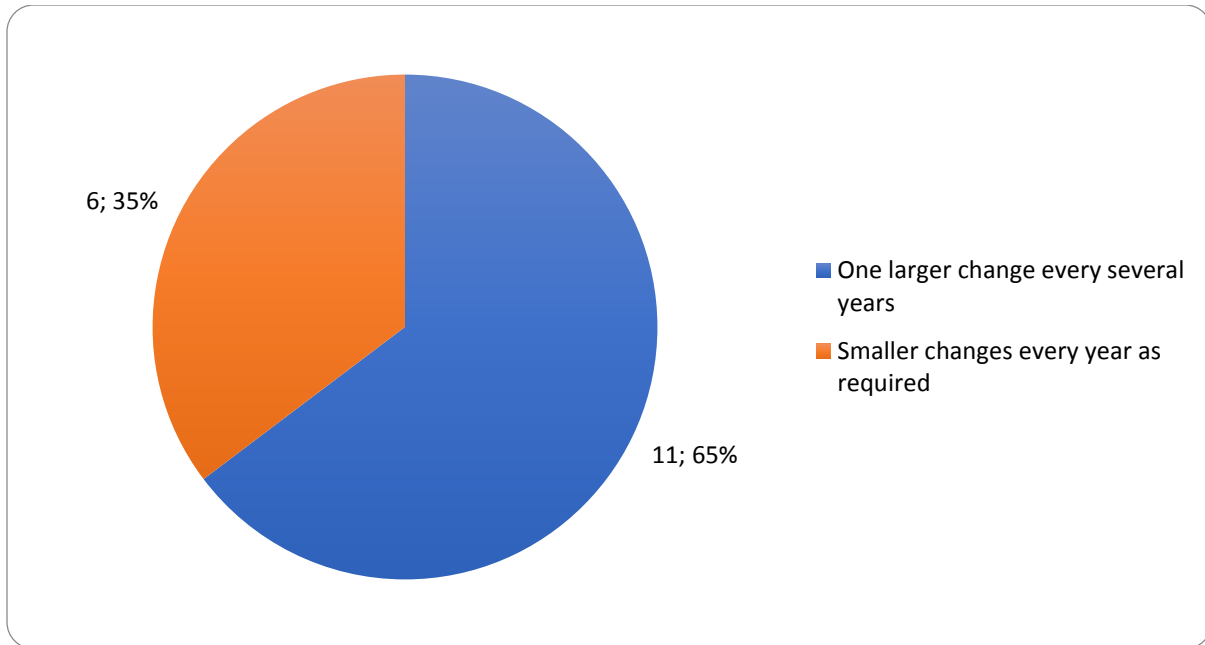


Figure 68. How would you like to see changes to transit fares happen?

Questions and comments

After the information was presented at the virtual workshops and during the interactive sessions, there were several questions and comments from participants. The questions and comments have been organized into the following categories: payment methods, fare programs, methods of funding, and fare pricing.

Payment methods

- Questions regarding how much the additional fee would be when using debit, credit, Android pay, or Apple pay
- Support for maintaining cash as a payment option
- Interest in universal cashless methods for visitors who do not have an OnYourWay card
- Interest in kiosks to buy and print single use tickets and day passes

Fare programs

- Questions regarding eligibility for Kids Ride Free program
- Interest in continuing sponsored fare program that offers free rides to Guelph Storm hockey games for ticket holders
- Interest in combined Corporate Pass program for Downtown Guelph Business Association
- Support for making the Affordable Bus Pass pilot program permanent

- Support for making the Kids Ride Free program permanent to encourage transit ridership at an early age
- General interest in incentivizing transit use among adults to help with traffic and air pollution

Methods of funding

- Support for funding via a combination of increasing taxes and increasing fares
- Interest in using parking revenue to fund transit
- Support for everyone paying for transit, not just those who use it

Fare pricing

- Concerns over future fare increases not being explained well enough to the public
- Support for having a mixed approach to fare increases of some smaller and some larger changes
- Concerns that waiting for four years to make a large increase may cause budgeting issues for some
- Concerns that smaller increases make it more difficult if paying cash (i.e., its easier to add a quarter than a nickel or dime)

5. Conclusions

Based on the feedback received, the existing fare structure, programs, policies, and pricing were reviewed to better meet the needs of the public and address areas of concern. The outcomes of this review resulted in the recommendations in this report.