

Via email: clerks@guelph.ca

April 20, 2023

**RE: Agenda item 6.5
Transit Fare Strategy – 2023-102**

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council,

The Guelph Chamber of Commerce enables Guelph businesses and citizens to thrive by facilitating conversations, connections and solutions that drive community prosperity. We commend staff's efforts to ensure the Fare Strategy meets the needs of customers today and in the future by creating an affordable, attractive, and accessible fare system.

We agree that fare capping provides customers with equitable access and flexibility and encourages off-peak transit usage that will benefit businesses and help the City reach its climate goals. We are however, concerned about the following components: 1) holding transfer time at 60 minutes, and 2) the higher-than-inflation increase on adult fares.

Increasing transfer times from 60 minutes to 120 minutes would be in line with comparator cities listed in the strategy report. It would alleviate potential barriers for people who need more time to travel or rest between transfer points; improve flexibility and access for customers to utilize the transit system for quick trips to restaurants or invest in local businesses; and allow riders to complete their journey on one fare should there be any transit delays, cancellations, or full buses.

We also know that for every dollar invested in transit, there is an economic spinoff of up to \$5.00. Increasing transfer times to 90–120 minutes could create up to five times the investment in economic activity community-wide, and especially in the downtown core.

The nineteen (19) percent fare increase for adult users is too much for transit passengers to bear in one year; a preferable option would be to spread the increase over two or three years. Many transit customers are already suffering from affordability challenges. A 19% rise will compound this issue and will most certainly not entice other community members to choose transit as a transportation option.

In an effort to increase ridership and encourage talent to choose Guelph as a place to work, we hope the considerations above are taken into serious consideration when making your decision. As always, we welcome the opportunity to work with you to engage the business community on these matters and are already engaged with staff to do so in the development of the Corporate Pass Program.

Sincerely,



Shakiba Shayani
President & CEO