



**Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 30, 2020**

Date: January 24, 2020

From: Councillors Sharmarke Dubow, Ben Isitt, Jeremy Loveday and Sarah Potts

Subject: Expansion of Youth Bus Pass Program

Background:

In April 2019, Victoria City Council endorsed “a major expansion of public transit ridership in the Capital Region, focused on the phasing out of user fees and a substantial improvement in service levels and fleet electrification,” beginning with elimination of “user fees for people 18 years of age and younger.”

In August 2019, the Victoria Regional Transit Commission voted 4-4 on a proposed pilot program to provide fare-free public transit to youth in the Capital Region. Lacking a majority of votes, the pilot program was not initiated by the Regional Transit Commission at that time.

In December 2019, the City of Victoria initiated a Youth Bus Pass Program on its own initiative, removing user fee barriers for public transit ridership funded through a combination of general revenues and parking revenues.

The City of Victoria Youth Bus Pass program has been a big success, with more than 2,100 local youth accessing the program, resulting in substantial savings to families, at an approximate monthly cost to the city of \$81,000.

Introduction of the City of Victoria program has also created a regional inequity in access to mobility for youth: while City of Victoria residents aged 18 years and younger now having access to fare-free public transit, youth who reside outside the city limits lack this access. This inequity exists within specific school communities, where catchment boundaries extend across municipal borders, and the inequity also exists within neighbourhoods straddling the borders of Victoria, Esquimalt, Saanich and Oak Bay.

It is therefore recommended that Council advocate to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission to reconsider the introduction of a pilot program to provide fare-free public transit for people 18 years and younger throughout the area served by the Commission.

Recommendation:

That Council endorses the following resolution and directs staff to forward a copy to Victoria Regional Transit Commission for consideration at its meeting of February 25, 2020:

The City of Victoria:

1. Endorses the initiation of a pilot program to provide fare-free public transit for youth across the Capital Region, to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and promote transit ridership and sustainable mobility from an early age.
2. Requests that the Victoria Regional Transit Commission reconsider at its February 25, 2020 meeting the initiation of a pilot program beginning in 2020 to provide fare-free public transit to people 18 years and younger in the Capital Region.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Dubow



Councillor Isitt



Councillor Loveday



Councillor Potts