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Item No. 21.5
Halifax Regional Council
January 27, 2026

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Brad Anguish, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 2, 2026

SUBJECT: Transit Fare Exemptions for Seniors

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

February 11, 2025, Regional Council motion (Item 15.3.2):

MOVED by Councillor Hinch, seconded by Councillor Kent

That Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to provide a staff report that evaluates the financial and operational feasibility of expanding the hours for the free transit for seniors' program currently offered by Halifax Transit on Tuesdays to start earlier in the morning and end later in the day.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Halifax Transit currently offers free transit for adults 65 years and older on all bus and ferry services from 10:00 am to 3:30 pm and after 6:00 pm every Tuesday. This program was first introduced in 2012 with a motion from Halifax Regional Council to approve the implementation of a pilot program to give free transit to older adults on Tuesdays. Beginning in September 2012 and lasting for three months, the pilot program was extended indefinitely thus resulting in the permanent implementation of this program. The availability of discounts or free fare periods for older adults varies greatly across Canadian transit agencies.

The financial impacts of expanding the free transit for seniors' program to all day Tuesday would be approximately \$185,640 annually in lost revenue. In Halifax, there are minimal operational concerns, but increased ridership during peak periods is likely to result in approximately one to three additional overloads on Tuesdays, which currently averages more than 200 overloads per day.

BACKGROUND

On August 2, 2011, Halifax Regional Council requested a report on the feasibility of implementing free transit trips for seniors during non-peak hours one day a week. At the Transportation Standing Committee meeting on October 27, 2011, an information report on the feasibility of providing a seniors' day program was brought forward. This report noted that it was more common to provide discounted fares than free transit service for older adults. The outcomes of this report stated that there would be a loss in revenue if Halifax Transit implemented a free transit for seniors' program which would have to be recouped through tax rate adjustments, service level decreases or an increase in other fares. In addition, there was no accurate way to provide projections or actual revenue loss. However, the report did provide a high-level estimate from Moncton (Codiac Transit) and applied it to Halifax Transit's ridership levels to estimate that revenue loss for Halifax Transit would be \$330,009 annually (Attachment A).

At the August 14, 2012, Regional Council meeting, a motion was introduced to approve the implementation of a pilot program to provide free transit to older adults on Tuesdays from 10:00 am – 3:30 pm and after 6:00 pm on all transit routes, beginning in September 2012 (Attachment B). An amendment to the motion was presented to Council to expand the hours from 10:00 am to end of the day but was defeated. The original motion was put and passed by council. The pilot was extended indefinitely in the 2013 budget process.

A staff report dated November 24, 2016, analyzed the demographic and income levels of seniors in Halifax and the financial impacts of the existing senior transit discounts. The report found that the senior population increased 29% from 2001 to 2011 while senior households living below the low-income threshold decreased 57% during the same period (Attachment C). The report also estimated that it costs approximately \$597,000 annually in foregone revenue to provide discounted passes and tickets for seniors.

A staff report dated June 11, 2019, included recommendations from Halifax Transit on several fare structural changes including eliminating the 65 and older fare bracket and merging it with adult fares thus requiring older adults to pay the same price as the adult fare (Attachment D). This proposed change was due to the implementation of the Low-Income Transit Pass Program and the partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Community Service which provided support based on income rather than age. Data at the time also suggested that seniors, which represent 17% of HRM's population, were one of the least financially vulnerable groups. While the recommendation to eliminate senior fares wasn't passed, Regional Council did adopt a fare increase for all groups. The fares were also increased in 2024 from \$2.00 to \$2.25 for Seniors and Youth (Attachment E).

On November 26, 2020, an information report was presented to the TSC examining seniors' income levels. It investigated income levels of older adults who regularly take transit, the cost of a free transit program for seniors and the cost of increasing the fare while adopting an enhanced senior's low-income pass program. The report estimated that the annual revenue from the youth/senior category of fares was \$2.4 million. The report also stated that it was not possible to determine the exact number of older adults paying fares, but that staff estimated that older adults accounted for roughly two-thirds of this category making the estimate of revenue loss of eliminating all fares for older adults at \$1.6 million annually (Attachment D).

DISCUSSION

Since the last report related to seniors' fares in 2020, significant changes have occurred both locally and globally. The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped travel patterns and public health priorities, while a sharp rise in the cost of living has placed added financial pressure on many residents, throughout all age categories. Halifax has also experienced unprecedented population growth, placing new demands on transit services. During this time, Halifax Transit has continued to implement the Moving Forward Together Plan (MFTP) and introduced the Rapid Transit Strategy (RTS), both of which represent major shifts in the city's transit network and long-term service planning.

Since 2020, Canadians have experienced increasing financial pressures driven by the rising cost of living, and inflation. As of July 2023, older adults¹ comprised nearly 19% of the national population and 17% in Halifax, a proportion expected to continue to grow (see Figure 1). While government support programs such as the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Old Age Security (OAS), and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) have contributed to a decline in low-income rates among older adults, income growth has slowed and continues to lag behind younger working-age groups². Following a period of elevated inflation and diminished purchasing power, Halifax experienced a recovery in 2024, with household income per capita increasing by 6.0% and purchasing power rising by 3.4%. Despite these gains, Halifax's poverty rate remained relatively high at 13.3% in 2023 and the average consumer debt has increased, underscoring ongoing affordability challenges³.

Year	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Halifax (CMA), Nova Scotia	421,978	427,891	430,249	438,022	453,010	473,565	498,943	530,167
65 and Older	52,404	56,779	61,798	66,567	72,135	78,494	85,261	91,411
% of Total Population	12%	13%	14%	15%	16%	17%	17%	17%

Figure 1: Populations of Seniors in HRM from 2010 to 2024

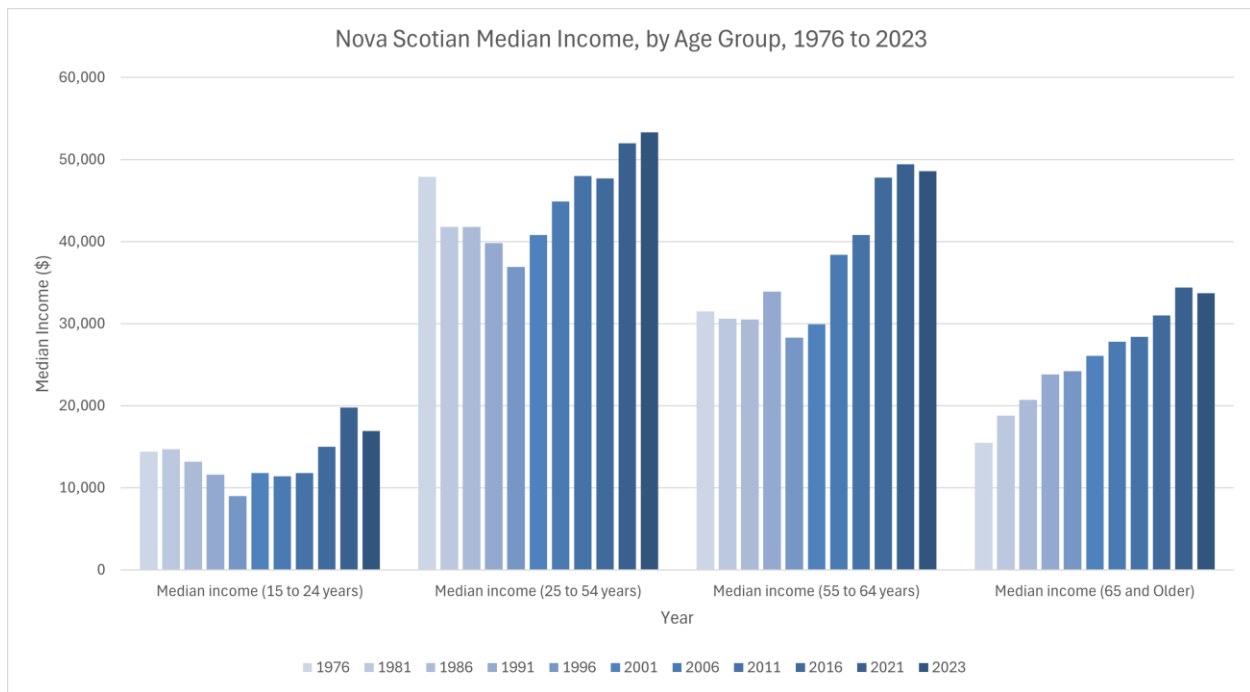


Figure 2: Median Incomes in Nova Scotia, by age group (1976 – 2023)

1. Major organizations such as the American Medical Association, and the American Psychological Association recommend using the term “older adults” to reduce stigma as terms such as “seniors”, “senior citizens” or “the elderly” as those terms could be potentially ageist. These terms have also been updated on Statistics Canada websites and have been promoted within the Office of Diversity & Inclusion in HRM.
2. Karine Leclerc, The poverty rate and low-income situation of older persons in Canada: An intersectional analysis, Statistics Canada, 2024: [The poverty rate and low-income situation of older persons in Canada](#)
3. Affordability, Halifax Partnership, 2025: [Halifax Partnership | Halifax Affordability](#)

Figure 2 illustrates the change in median income across different age groups in Nova Scotia from 1976 to 2023. Those aged 25 to 64 years old consistently have the highest median income and have seen an upward trend through the past few decades compared to youth and seniors. Seniors and youth had comparable median incomes in 1976 (\$15,500 vs. \$14,400) but have seen a shift with seniors more than doubling their median incomes in 2023 to \$33,700 while youth saw a minor increase to \$16,900⁴.

Several factors help explain why seniors' incomes have risen consistently over time compared to other age groups. One key factor is that the proportion of seniors who remain in the workforce continues to grow. Since the 1990s, employment rates among those aged 65 and older have climbed from roughly 10% of men and 3.5% of women in 1990 to 18.5% of men and 10.8% of women in 2023⁵. This trend aligns with the rising life expectancy in Canada, which increased from 77.5 years to 81.7 years in the same timeframe⁶. Seniors are living longer and working later into life, contributing to higher incomes. Additionally, increases to OAS and the CPP, along with gains in market income sources such as investments, private pensions, and property values, have further enhanced some seniors' financial standing.

To support youth and seniors, Halifax Transit offers programs and discounts to assist these groups in accessing transit. Youth under the age of 12 do not have to purchase tickets and can ride for free while students in grades 7 through 12 currently have access to free transit via the Student Transit Pass Program. Those who attend post-secondary institutions have access to the UPass program which offers discounted fares as part of their student fees. Seniors in HRM can ride transit for free during designated hours on Tuesdays and have a general 25% discount on fare tickets. These programs help reduce financial barriers for both seniors and youth, and for those who require financial assistance regardless of age, the Affordable Access Transit Pass and Provincial programs are also available.

Affordable Access Transit Pass Program

Halifax Transit operates an Affordable Access Transit Pass Program (AATP) which allows program users to purchase monthly passes for 50% off the regular price. Under the AATP, users would pay \$45 for an adult pass and \$69.50 for a Regional Express monthly pass, which is half the cost of regular fares. Eligible users must reside within the municipality and have an annual household income of less than \$49,000. This threshold was updated in 2025 to reflect the increasing cost of living. Participants must also be older than 18 and not receive an annual pass from the Department of Opportunities and Social Development.

Opportunities and Social Development Pass

Halifax Transit and the Provincial Department of Opportunities and Social Development operate a transit pass program for residents and their families who participate in Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) programs. Those clients living in the Halifax Transit service area are eligible for a free annual bus pass for themselves as well as for their spouses and any of their dependants ages 13 to 21 who are not part of the Student Transit Pass Program. In 2019/2020 around 360 income assistance recipients aged 65 and older were eligible for this program with 70% of those participating. Currently, 7,378 Department of Community Services bus passes were issued for the 2025/26 year for participating recipients and their dependents.

Experiences in other Canadian cities

4. Statistics Canada. [Table 11-10-0239-01 Income of individuals by age group, sex and income source, Canada, provinces and selected census metropolitan areas](#)

5. Statistics Canada. [The poverty rate and low-income situation of older persons in Canada: An intersectional analysis](#)

6. Statistics Canada. [Table 13-10-0837-01 Life expectancy and other elements of the complete life table, single-year estimates, Canada, all provinces except Prince Edward Island](#)

A variety of municipalities and transit agencies across Canada offer some sort of discount for seniors' and some offer different versions of a free senior's fare program. Data from the CUTA (Canadian Urban Transit Association) Canadian Transit Fact Book, 2024 shows that 12 out of 13 transit agencies with similar population to Halifax offer discounted tickets/passes and/or a full free day(s) of transit for seniors (Figure 3). Further exploration demonstrates that some transit agencies throughout Canada offer one or multiple days of free transit, some offer a general discount fare for older adults while others offer free transit all the time compared to Halifax which only offers this during certain hours on Tuesdays (Figure 4).

Jurisdictions Based on Fleet Size / Population	Adult Cash Fare	Adult Monthly Pass	Senior Cash Fare	Senior Monthly Pass	Municipal Population	Service Area Population
Halifax, NS	\$3.00	\$90.00	\$2.00 ⁷	\$60.00	477,398	369,060
Barrie, ON	\$3.50	\$91.00	\$3.00	\$53.00	159,521	159,521
Burlington, ON	\$3.50	\$110.00	Free ⁸	Free	201,467	195,311
Central Fraser Valley, BC	N/A ⁹	N/A	N/A	N/A	163,581	163,581
Gatineau, QC	\$4.50	\$110.00	\$2.80	\$48.50	302,616	302,616
Greater Sudbury, ON	\$4.00	\$100.50	\$4.00	\$56.00	166,004	152,819
Kelowna, BC	N/A ¹⁰	N/A	N/A	N/A	164,014	164,014
Oakville, ON	\$4.00	\$143.00	\$4.00	Free	233,700	225,695
Regina, SK	\$3.25	\$88.00	\$3.25	\$30.00	255,395	255,395
Saskatoon, SK	\$3.00	\$83.00	\$3.00	\$29.00	308,400	308,400
Simcoe County, ON	\$2.00	N/A	\$2.00	N/A ¹¹	307,050	307,050
Victoria, BC	\$2.50	\$85.00	\$2.50	\$45.00	417,631	417,631
Windsor, ON	\$3.75	\$115.00	\$3.75	\$57.75	229,660	229,660

Figure 3: 2024 Comparison of senior and adult fares by CUTA Population Group 3 (Pop. 150,001 – 400,000)

Transit Agency	Municipality/Province	Type of Senior Fare	Senior Fare Price	Adult Fare Price
Halifax Transit	Halifax, Nova Scotia	Discounted fares & free on certain times on Tuesdays	\$2.25	\$3.00
Barrie Transit	Barrie, Ontario	Free all day on Tuesdays & Thursdays. Age verified with photo ID 65 +	\$3.00	\$3.50

7. Effective September 1, 2024, seniors cash fares have increased to \$2.25

8. Burlington Transit does not charge seniors for fares

9. Fares not provided in report. Single Ride fares cost \$2.50 regardless of age.

10. Fares not provided in report. Current fares for Kelowna Regional Transit are \$3.00 single ride, \$80.00 for adult monthly pass and \$55.00 for student/senior monthly pass

11. Linx Transit provides 15% discount off seniors/student

Burlington Transit	Burlington, Ontario	Free transit all day everyday	Ages verified with PRESTO card (free)	\$2.75 with PRESTO card, \$3.50 without
Calgary Transit	Calgary, Alberta	General discounted fares for seniors	\$159 annual pass	\$1,416 annual cost equivalent
Transit Cape Breton	Cape Breton, Nova Scotia	Reduced fare for seniors (55+)	\$1.00	\$1.25
Codiac Transpo	Moncton, New Brunswick	Free on Wednesdays. Must show proof of age to ride for free	\$3.00 Monthly pass (\$57)	\$3.00 Monthly pass (\$72)
Fredericton Transit	Fredericton, New Brunswick	65 Plus Club Pass; \$65 annually for seniors 65+, proof of age required	\$3.00 \$65 annually for seniors	\$3.00 \$1,020 annually for adults.
GO Transit	Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area	General discount for PRESTO card	55% regular fares	Varies by distance
Oakville Transit	Oakville, Ontario	Free transit everyday. Age verification with PRESTO card	Free with a PRESTO Card. \$4 without	\$3.45 with Presto Card, \$4 cash
OC Transpo	Ottawa, Ontario	Free all day on Wednesdays & Sundays. Age verification with PRESTO card	\$3.20 with PRESTO Card, \$4.05 without	\$4 with Presto Card, \$4.05 without
Roam Transit	Bow Valley, Alberta (Banff, Canmore, Kananaskis)	50% off fares	\$1.00-\$6.25 depending on regional route	\$2.00-\$12.50 depending on regional route
Saint John Transit	Saint John, New Brunswick	Same price as regular fare (\$3.00)	Monthly passes \$60.90 for seniors	Monthly passes \$82.25 for adults
Metrobus	St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador	Same price as regular fare (\$2.50).	Some may qualify for free transit if they are part of the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) Bus Pass Program	\$2.50
Société de transport de Laval (STL)	Laval, Quebec	Free all day for conventional buses (no rail) under the Horizon 65+ program	Must have verified OPUS card	\$3.75
Société de transport de Montréal (STM)	Montreal, Quebec	Free transit in Zone A	Must have a 65+ photo OPUS card.	\$3.75 for a single ride in Zone A
Wood Buffalo Transit	Wood Buffalo, Alberta	Free transit everyday (excludes paratransit)	Photo ID used to verify age at driver's discretion	\$2.25

Figure 4: Comparison of senior transit programs across Canada

Some cities offer free transit all day everyday for those 65 years and older including, Burlington, Brampton, Mississauga, Montreal & Oakville. In these cities, residents must sign up for their program to prove their age beforehand and age verification is done through their transit card while they board. In Montreal, where transit is free within the urban core, there was an increase of about 15-20% in seniors ridership in the first six months of the implementation of their program. Burlington Transit senior ridership rose 27% after the introduction of free transit for older adults during the midday period in 2019 and in 2023 this program was expanded to all day, 7days/week at an estimated cost of \$160,000 annually. Older adults were more likely to board midday in Burlington than peak times after the free fares all day policy was implemented. Similarly, older adults who wished to participate in this program must verify their age with the PRESTO card and scan

when taking transit. Other agencies such as BC Transit have discounts for low-income seniors and offer free ferry service to those over 65 on certain days of the week while Calgary Transit offers general discounted fares for older adults at \$159 annually compared to adult general pass at \$1,416. GO Transit provides general discounted fares for older adults with 55% off all trips when using the Presto card.

Current Conditions

HFXGO data provides insight into when older adults are using transit, which helps in assessing potential operational impacts. Fares being purchased by seniors are 68% from paper tickets and 17% from the Halifax Transit mobile fare payment app (HFXGO) while the remaining 15% comes from cash sales. While HFXGO data offers a useful snapshot, it does not fully capture the operational impacts of expanding the free transit program for seniors. For context, paper ticket purchases are comprised of approximately 28% youth/seniors and about 2% of total revenue ridership recorded through HFXGO. This indicates that paper ticket usage among older adults remains significantly higher than HFXGO tickets which limits the accuracy of the operational analysis.

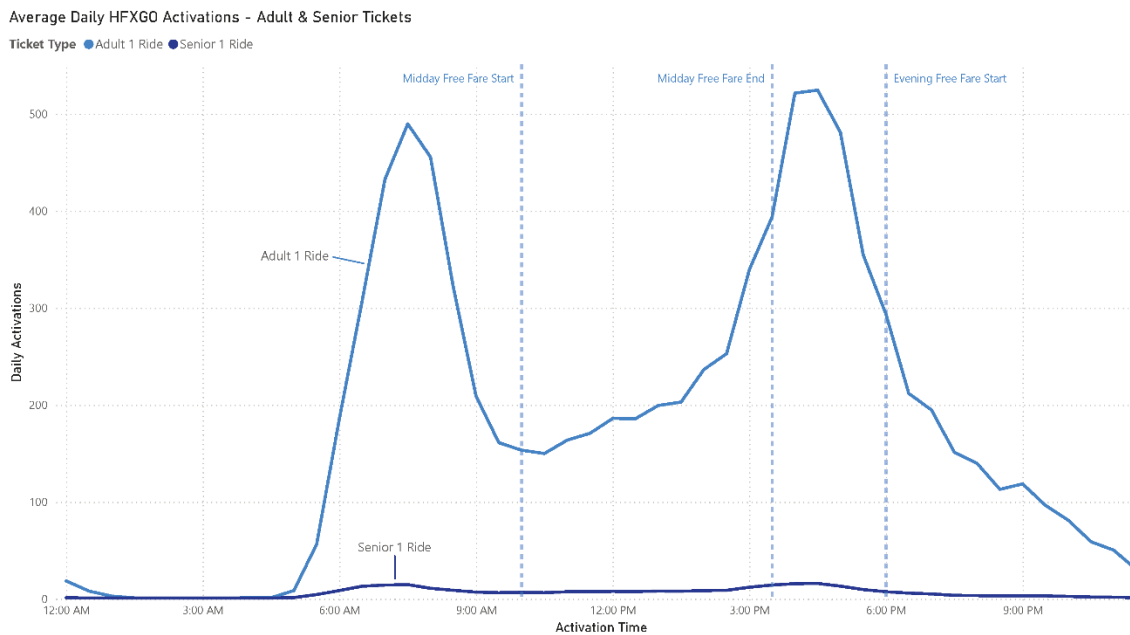


Figure 5: Average Daily HFXGO Activations – Adults & Seniors

Figure 5 illustrates the average daily HFXGO activations by adults and seniors. During the morning and afternoon peak periods, activations among adults increase significantly, while senior activations show only a slight rise. As well, Figure 6 indicates that most overload incidents occur during the peak times, with the highest number recorded during the afternoon peak (3:30 pm – 6:00 pm). On Tuesdays, the average number of overload incidents is greatest during the PM peak, followed by the AM peak. Figure 7 shows that weekly overload incidents are most frequent on Wednesdays (206 incidents), followed by Tuesdays (201) and Thursdays (192). Overload occurrences are lower on Mondays (116), Fridays (94), Saturdays (42) and Sundays (23). Seniors who use the HFXGO app seem to display a similar travel pattern as the public who commute during the AM and PM peaks and thus could likely be travelling for work or need to travel for appointments during these times.

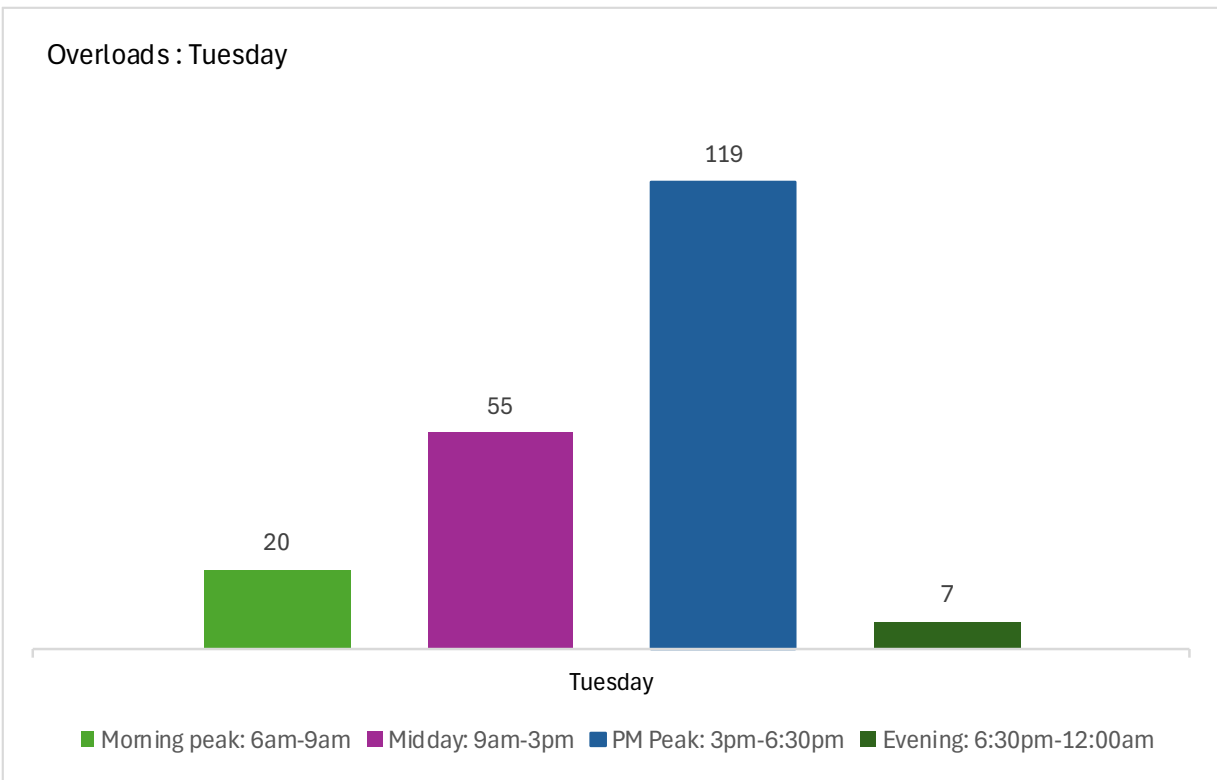


Figure 6: Tuesday Overload Incidents (2025)

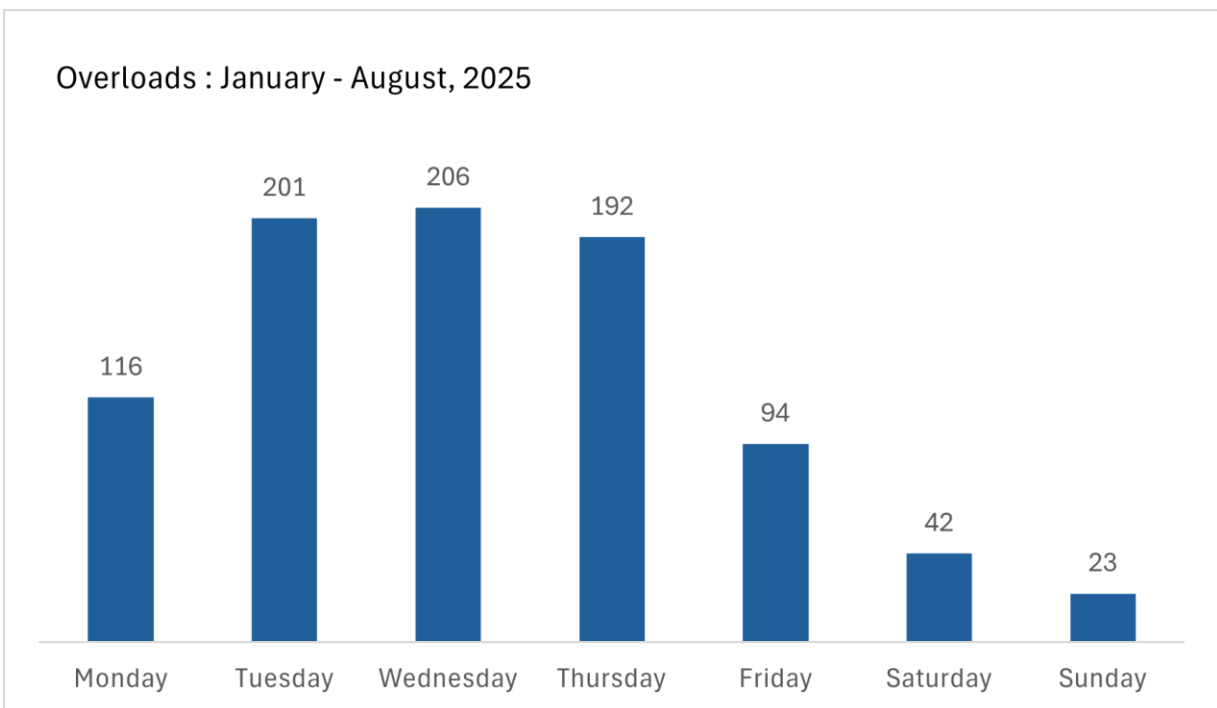


Figure 7: Weekly Overload Incidents (2025)

Operational Feasibility

Seniors make up a small portion of existing passengers and estimates show that providing free transit for seniors all day Tuesday might cause minor overloads or delays, specifically due to increased passenger volumes at peak times. While the impact is expected to be minor, additional boardings, alightings, and dwell times, as well as any additional overloads or capacity constraints, could have repercussions on schedule adherence and service reliability for all passengers, particularly as transit service increases have not kept pace with ridership growth or congestion in recent years. However, the potential overall impact is not quantifiable, and as part of the broader planning for resource allocation to address ridership demand, the role of additional older adults at peak times is expected to be quite modest.

As many transit trips during peak times are nearing or at capacity, it is expected that older adults taking discretionary or non-time sensitive trips will tend to travel during less busy times when possible, particularly if they require, or prefer, seating during their trips. However, there are some routes/trips with capacity even during peak periods, and expanding free fares for the full day would allow passengers flexibility to explore travel options that work for them.

To mitigate operational concerns, rather than free trips for older adults on Tuesdays, the program could be shifted to either Mondays or Fridays, which typically have less ridership, fewer overloads, and fewer reliability concerns. However, this may be less useful to existing passengers who have been using the program for many years and could result in initial ridership losses.

In terms of implementation, eliminating fares for seniors for the full day on Tuesdays would simplify the existing program, reduce confusion for passengers, and would be easier to communicate. Challenges have been raised in the past both by passengers and staff regarding trips taken by older adults during the transitions between free and paid periods of the day on Tuesdays. With the current parameters, an early or late bus trip could result in a senior paying fares unexpectedly, although in practice transit staff are typically lenient in these instances. However, expanding the program to the full day would remove concerns around the boarding time, which could be a potential barrier for some passengers.

To expand the free fare period for the full day on Tuesdays would require Regional Council to make an amendment to By-law U-100. Following that, implementation would include updates to printed and digital materials, and updating staff and residents.

Access-A-Bus

Access-A-Bus (AAB) has the same fare structure as conventional transit and offers free trips for older adults during the same time periods on Tuesdays. Between January 1 and June 30, 2025, AAB completed approximately 15,527 trips on Tuesdays. Of these, 17% (2,650 trips) were recorded under the Youth/Senior fare category. Based on internal estimates, approximately 60% of these riders were seniors, representing around 1,584 trips taken by older adults during this period. Unfilled trips are trips that were requested but were not completed nor cancelled. On average, there are approximately 56.1 unfilled trips on Tuesdays, the second highest of the week after Thursdays (59.1). Removing financial barriers in access transit may result in increased demand and ridership which could put a strain on AAB resources given current conditions.

Fare Elasticity and Overload Impacts

Transport demand models show that reducing transit fares leads to increases in ridership. A full, 100% fare reduction for a targeted group, such as older adults can be expected to generate a significant, though variable, increase in usage¹². While general fare elasticity suggests a 2% to 5% rise in ridership for modest

12. Todd Litman, Understanding Transport Demands and Elasticities: How Prices and Other Factors Affect Travel Behavior., Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 2025: [Transportation Elasticities](#)

fare reductions, a complete elimination to fares, even if limited to one day, is likely to encourage more older adults to take advantage of public transit services by removing financial barriers entirely¹³. Other municipalities which implemented a free transit for seniors' program such as Montreal which saw around 15-20% increase during the first 6 months of their implementation while Burlington saw senior ridership increased by 28%. Based on research published by the Victoria Transport Policy Institute (VTPI), a 100% fare reduction during peak periods could increase peak ridership by up to 20-50% over the long term¹³. However, individual travel behaviours vary, and some may avoid travelling during peak periods to avoid overcrowding or having to stand on the bus. Based on past examples, it can be assumed that there will be an increase in ridership across the day with slight increases during peaks.

The exact proportion of Halifax Transit riders over the age of 65 cannot be determined with certainty given current data. However, estimates based on ticket sales and experiences in other cities suggest that a 60% increase in the number of older adults using Halifax Transit each Tuesday would cause between one and three additional daily overloads on top of the current 201 Tuesday average overloads. It is unlikely these overloads would be consistent, instead they would most likely occur unpredictably across several of Halifax Transit's most crowded routes based on daily traffic conditions and individual travel choices.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total financial cost of expanding the free transit for seniors' program to all day on Tuesday would be approximately \$185,640 annually in lost revenue. This works out to an average of \$3,570 per day, comprising of \$947 from HFXGO single ride tickets and an average loss of \$2,623 from paper/cash tickets using data from Q1 2024/25.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was conducted for this report.

A seniors recreation services survey was recently conducted by the Parks and Recreation Business Unit to gather information on the needs of the senior community in accessing recreation in the municipality. The survey was conducted between March 31 and June 4, 2025, with 2,036 respondents.

Transportation was a common concern for respondents with around 39.1% stating Halifax Transit was their main method of accessing recreation programs. Approximately 11.4% stated that lack of transportation was a barrier to accessing programs especially in rural or suburban areas and stated that improvements to transit (reliability, directness to facilities) would make it easier to participate in recreation programs. There was also an interest from respondents for a free or subsidized bus passes or tickets to improve affordability as 37.6% stated that cost was a barrier to accessing recreation programming and that they require financial assistance to participate.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, SNS 2008, c 39:

- 7A The purposes of the Municipality are to
- (a) provide good government;
 - (b) provide services, facilities, and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality; and
 - (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

- 34 (3) The Council shall provide direction on the administration, plans, policies and programs of the Municipality to the Chief Administrative Officer
- 69 (1) The Municipality may provide a public transportation service by
(a) the purchase of vehicles or vessels and operation of the service;
(b) providing financial assistance to a person who will undertake to provide the service; or
(c) a combination of these methods.
- 79A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if
(a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;
(b) the expenditure is in respect of an emergency under the Emergency Management Act; or
(c) the expenditure is legally required to be paid
- 102 Subject to the approval of the Board for those services that are subject to the Public Utilities Act, the Council may, by by-law, prescribe charges for the provision of services for persons who use or benefit from the service, on a basis to be set out in the by-law
- 104 (1) The Council may make by-laws imposing, fixing and providing methods of enforcing payment of charges for...(d) transit facilities;

By-LawU-100, the *User Charges By-law*

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Transportation Standing Committee – Info Item No. 2. – October 27, 2011

Attachment B: Halifax Regional Council – Item No. 11.2.2 – August 14, 2012

Attachment C: Transportation Standing Committee – Item No. 5 – November 24, 2016

Attachment D: Transportation Standing Committee – Info Item No. 4. – November 26, 2020

Attachment E: Halifax Regional Council – Item No. 15.1.3. – August 6, 2024

Report Prepared by: Brendan Wilson, Project Manager, Transit Planning, Halifax Transit, 902.399.436

Transportation Standing Committee
October 27, 2011

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee



SUBMITTED BY: _____
Eddie Robar, Director, Metro Transit

DATE: October 7, 2011

SUBJECT: Free Transit Seniors' Day

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

August 10, 2011 Transportation Standing Committee meeting, Item 7.2.1 "Request for report re: feasibility of free transit trips for seniors (referred from August 2, 2011 meeting of Regional Council)":

MOVED by Councillor Fisher, seconded by Councillor Barkhouse, that the Transportation Standing Committee request Metro Transit staff to investigate the feasibility of having a Senior's Day on Metro Transit buses one day per week allowing seniors to ride the bus for free. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

BACKGROUND

Metro Transit currently provides discounted fares for seniors aged 65 or more. Two Canadian transit systems currently provide some form of free transit for seniors, while others are currently considering it.

DISCUSSION

In general, providing discounted transit fares for seniors is far more common than providing free transit service for seniors. Metro Transit currently provides a discount for seniors through reduced cash fares, tickets and monthly passes.

Experience in Ottawa

OC Transpo began offering free transit to seniors in the summer of 2007. Originally, it was offered on Wednesdays from June to August. In 2010, the free service was extended to Wednesdays all year. In 2011, this program was further extended to include Mondays and Fridays after Noon. In Ottawa, the program applies to all fixed-route service, but does not apply to their Para-Transit service (equivalent to Metro Transit's Access-a-Bus service).

Preliminary observations from Ottawa have shown a reduction in the sale of seniors' monthly passes after the program increased to three days per week. However, more detailed data is not yet available. Ottawa will be undertaking a detailed survey of seniors' travel patterns before and after the implementation of the free seniors' fares. This information should be available later in the Fall of 2011, and OC Transpo has agreed to share this information with Metro Transit when it is available.

Experience in Moncton

Codiac Transit offers free transit to seniors every Wednesday. Recent counts in their system showed an average of 1,100 trips by seniors on the free Wednesdays. Codiac Transit estimates that 700 (63.6%) of those represent new trips.

Experience in Other Places

Chicago and London, England have recently begun considering the elimination of free seniors' fares due to budget cutbacks. In both cases they have met with significant public opposition.

Barrie and Waterloo Region, Ontario, are both considering the provision of free transit for seniors.

Consideration of a Free Transit Seniors Day in HRM

If HRM were to proceed with a free transit seniors day, there would be a reduction in revenue that would have to be recouped through other sources such as tax rate adjustments, service level decreases or an increase in other fares. It is difficult to provide accurate projections of what that revenue loss would be because little data exists on travel patterns or fare payment patterns by seniors. One method to provide a high-level estimate is to take the findings from Moncton and project them to account for the differences in ridership levels between Moncton and HRM. This information is shown below:

	Codiac Transit	Metro Transit
Annual Boardings (2009)	2,251,471	23,717,010
Free Seniors Trips Weekly	1,100	11,623
Free Seniors Trips Annually	57,200	604,412
Free Seniors % of Total Boardings	2.54%	2.54%
Assumed % Existing Riders from Codiac	36.4%	36.4%
Assumed % New Riders from Codiac	63.6%	63.6%
Existing Riders Now Travelling Free Annually		220,006
Revenue Loss from Existing Riders (\$1.50 fare per trip)		\$330,009

While this provides one scenario of potential revenue loss, it should be cautioned that the margin of error on this projection is high due to the unknown nature of discretionary travel patterns. It is assumed that most seniors currently using a monthly pass would continue to do so, since if they are buying a monthly pass, one free day would not likely meet their needs. Calculating the potential revenue loss at the highest fare (cash) represents a conservative approach, and is prudent in a situation like this where there are many uncertainties.

There are other, qualitative items that should be considered with free seniors' fares:

- A free seniors' transit day would provide a social benefit to one segment of HRM's population;
- With HRM's aging population, the potential for decreased revenue generation increases over time;
- There is the potential for seniors pass holders to request a discount equivalent to one day per week, which would result in a further reduction in revenue if granted;
- If free transit fares are extended to a particular group, it could lead to requests from other groups, which could be difficult to refuse if a request for one group was granted; and
- Typically, if free fares are introduced, they are very difficult to remove if the program proves to be very expensive.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications of this information report.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

Request for Council's Consideration

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Included on Agenda
(Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon Thursday)</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Added Item
(Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon Monday)</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Request from the Floor</p> |
|---|--|---|

Date of Council Meeting: August 14, 2012

Subject: Free Transit Day for Seniors

Motion for Council to Consider:

“That Halifax Regional Council approve the implementation of a pilot project – Metro Transit once weekly Free Transit Day for Seniors, beginning in September 2012 and continuing for three months on Tuesdays, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. and resuming after 6:00 p.m., on all regular scheduled transit routes.”

Reason:

To lessen the financial burden for senior residents of HRM by providing the opportunity to travel to their medical appointments, carry out their banking, shopping, etc. one day per week on Metro Transit without cost.

Outcome Sought:

That the proposed pilot project be implemented.

Councillor Blumenthal

District 11 – Halifax North End



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 5.
Transportation Standing Committee
November 24, 2016

TO: Chair and Members of the Transportation Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Dave Reage, MCIP, LPP, Director, Halifax Transit

DATE: October 4, 2016

SUBJECT: Consideration of Low Income Transit Passes for Low Income Seniors

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

At the June 14, 2016 meeting of the Transportation Standing Committee, the following motion was put and passed:

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Walker:

That the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report outlining:

- a) An analysis of the demographic characteristics of seniors in the municipality, specifically as it relates to income level and the percentage of seniors that could be considered low income for the potential purpose of providing subsidized low income transit passes; and**
- b) An analysis of the existing costs of providing discounted transit fares for seniors.**

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, R.S.N.S. 2008, c. 39. section 69(1) provides the legislative authority for the Municipality to provide a public transportation service. Section 79(1)(o) provides the authority for Regional Council to expend money required by the municipality for public transportation services.

Schedule 1 of By-Law U-100, *User Charges By-law* describes user charges for Halifax Transit, including reduced rates for some groups.

BACKGROUND

Halifax Transit currently offers age-based discounts to transit passengers 65 years of age or older and children between the ages of 5 and 15. Table 1 below summarizes the discounted rate provided to children and Seniors. The discount offered varies by fare type, but is a reduction of between 21% and 30% of the regular fare:

Table 1: Percent Savings by Fare Media

Fare Media	Full Fare	Child/Senior Fare	Percent Savings
Cash Fare			
Conventional ¹	\$2.50	\$1.75	30%
MetroLink	\$3.00	\$2.25	25%
MetroX	\$3.50	\$2.75	21%
Sheet of 10 Tickets			
Conventional	\$20.00	\$14.50	28%
Monthly Pass			
Conventional	\$78.00	\$58.00	26%
MetroLink	\$94.50	N/A	N/A
MetroX	\$111.00	N/A	N/A
SmartTrip Epass			
Conventional	\$702.00/year	\$522.00/year	26%

Free Transit Service for Seniors

In August 2012, Regional Council approved a motion to offer transit service free to residents 65 and older on Tuesdays during the off-peak period (midday and evenings). As such, Seniors can travel free of charge on Tuesdays, from 10:00am to 3:30pm, and after 6:00pm, on regular bus, and ferry services. Additional fare for MetroX (\$1.00) and MetroLink (\$0.50) is required. Access-A-Bus services are excluded from this program.

Seniors who qualify for free travel are advised to carry proper photo identification as the Operator may request proof of age upon boarding.

Low Income Transit Pass Pilot Program

In June 2016, Regional Council approved Schedule 1 of By-law U-100 which enabled the launch of the Low Income Transit Pass Pilot Program. The criteria stated that any Halifax resident with an annual household income of \$33,000 per year or less could be eligible² for the program, regardless of age. If selected, participants in the six month pilot program could purchase monthly passes at a rate of 50% off the regular monthly pass price. This discount provided through the pilot program is on the Adult monthly pass rate only, and will not be applied to the already reduced Seniors' monthly pass rate despite the fact the participant may be 65 years of age or older.

Pilot program participants who are Seniors would still be receiving a 33% discount above what they would receive by purchasing a Seniors monthly pass.³ At time of writing, it is unclear how many pilot program participants are 65 years of age or older.

¹ Conventional service includes bus, ferry, Access-A-Bus

² With the exception of those currently receiving subsidization for transportation costs from another agency.

³ A Seniors' monthly conventional transit pass is \$58 per month and the Low Income Transit Pass Pilot Program offers the conventional transit pass to qualified program participants at \$39 per month.

DISCUSSION

Halifax Demographic Composition

According to the Halifax Census Metropolitan Area profile, in 2011, the median age of residents is 39.9 years, and 84.7% of residents are over 15 years of age. At this time, there were 51,105 residents 65 years of age or older, representing approximately 13% of the population. As per Table 2 below, between 2002 and 2011, the number of residents age 65 or older saw an overall percent change of 29%.

Table 2: Age Cohort Percent Change, Halifax CMA (2001, 2006 and 2011)

Age Cohorts, Halifax CMA	2001	2006	2011	Percent Change in Age Cohort (2001 to 2011)
65 to 74 years	21,560	24,250	28,680	33%
75 to 84 years	13,585	15,040	15,770	16%
85 years and over	4,385	5,675	6,655	52%
Overall	39,530	44,965	51,105	29%

Average Household Income for Seniors in Halifax

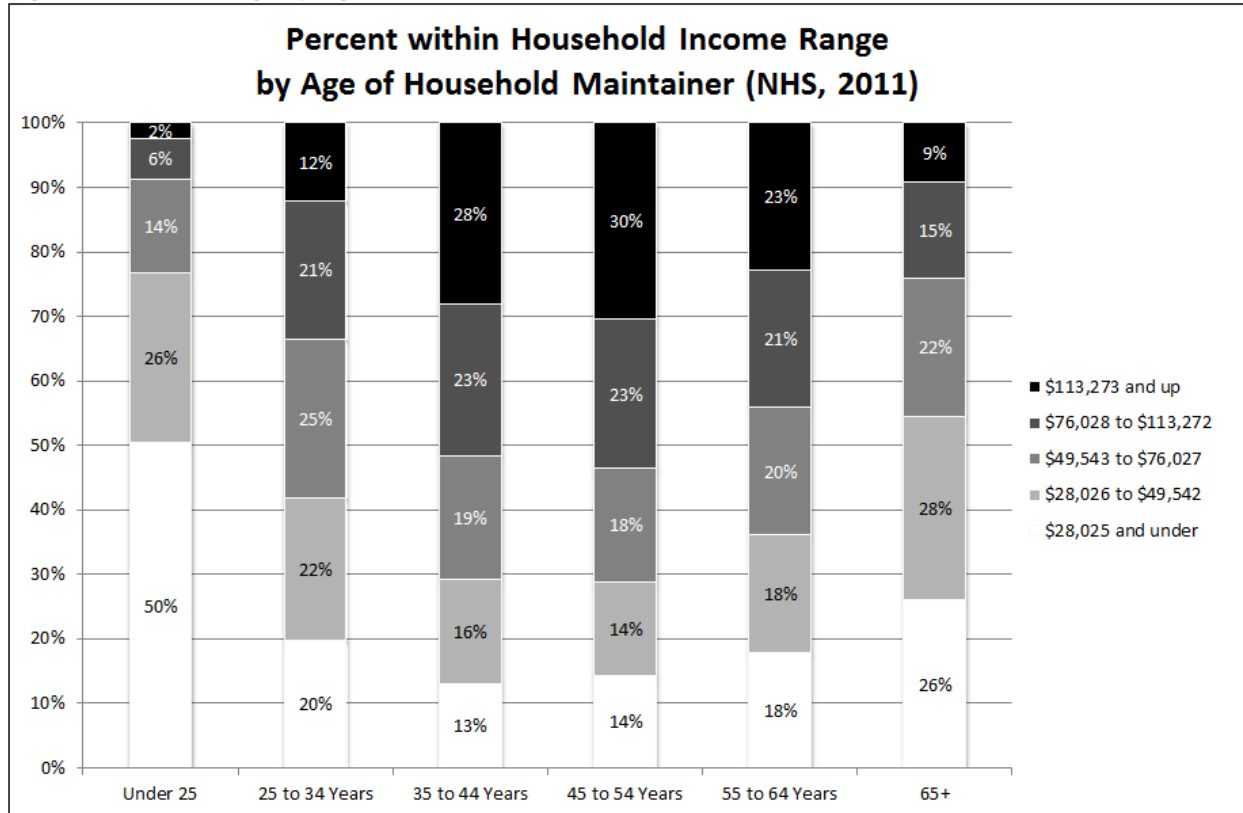
The 2011 National Household Survey compiled the average household income of Halifax residents grouped by the age of the primary household maintainer.⁴ The data is broken into income deciles, grouped below in Figure 1.⁵

Figure 1 details the breakdown of average household income by primary household maintainer's age as of 2011. Figure 2 illustrates the same data as of 2001. The household income breakdown in 2011 indicates that of households in Halifax where the primary household maintainer is 65 years old or older, approximately 26% have an average household income of \$28,025 or less, below the Halifax Low Income Index which in 2011 was \$30,000 per household.

⁴ According to Statistics Canada, the primary household maintainer is the first person in the household named in the survey. The order of the persons in a household is determined by the order in which the respondent lists the persons on the questionnaire. Generally, an adult is listed first followed, if applicable, by that person's spouse or common-law partner and by their children. The order does not necessarily correspond to the proportion of household payments made by the person.

⁵ Figures 1 and 2 group deciles into five income categories for the sake of clarity. If household income was distributed equally across all age cohorts in figures 1 and 2, then each income category would represent 20% of all households in the age cohort. Any percentage above or below 20% represents that this income category is more or less common in a particular age cohort.

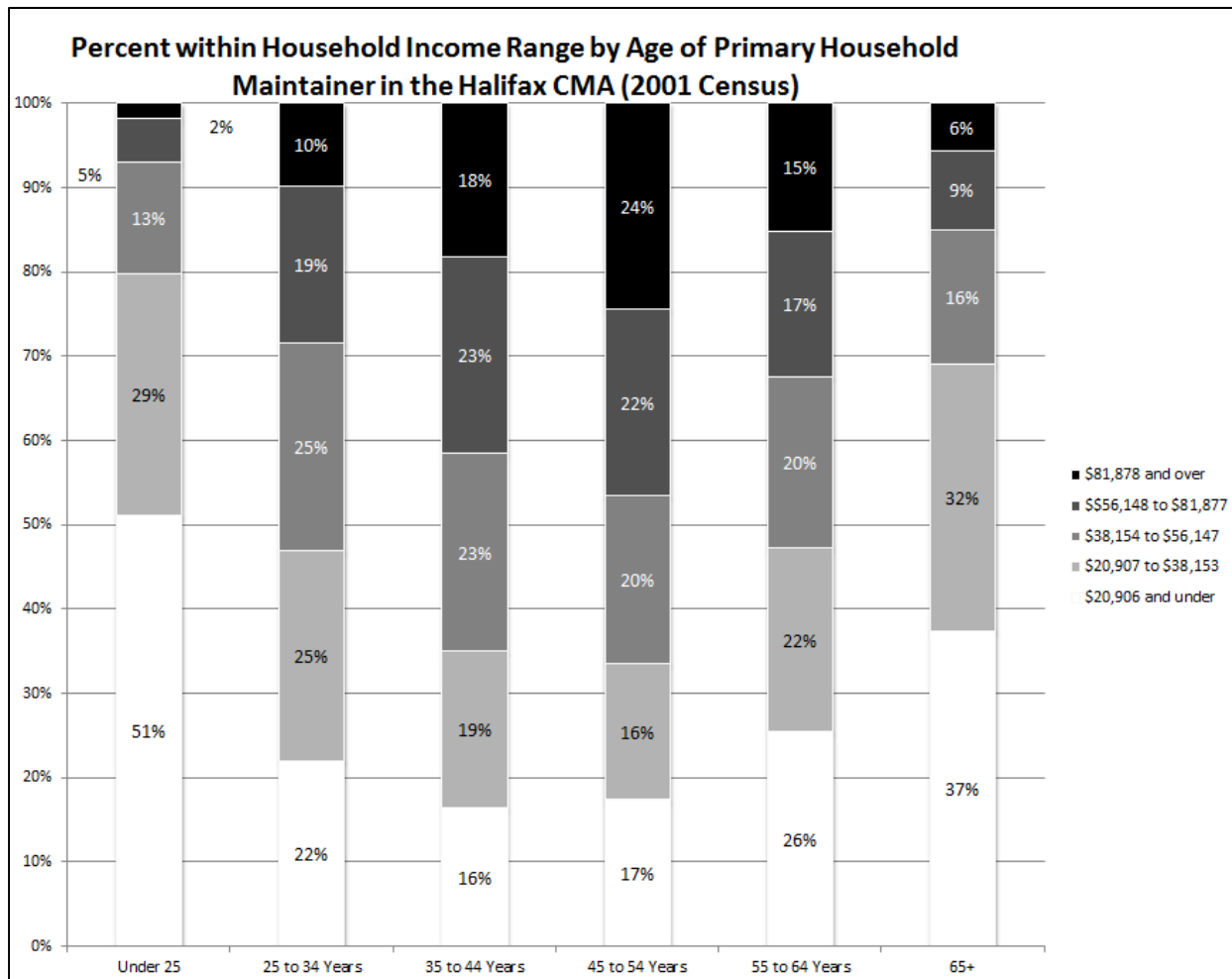
Figure 1: Income Range by Age of Household Maintainer (2011)



The oldest age cohort is overrepresented in the lowest income category when compared to households led by maintainers in other age cohorts between the ages of 25 and 64. However, households with a maintainer under the age of 25 are at least twice as likely to be in the lowest income category when compared to any other age cohort.

Figure 2 details the breakdown of average household income by primary household maintainer's age as of 2001. Similar to 2011, the household income breakdown in 2001 indicates that of households in Halifax where the primary household maintainer is 65 years old or older, approximately 37% have an average household income of \$20,906 or less, and 57% have an average household income of below \$29,460.

Figure 2: Income Range by Age of Household Maintainer (2001)



Based on an income threshold of approximately \$30,000 per household or less, between 2001 and 2011, the number of Senior-led households that fell within this category declined from 57% in 2001 to 26% in 2011. Over the same period, the number of seniors residing in Halifax has increased by 29%, indicating that while the number of Seniors is increasing, so too is the average household income of this age cohort. While Seniors are overrepresented in the lowest two income categories (i.e. more than 20% of households of fall into each of the lowest income categories), so too are other age cohorts.

Cost of Offering Reduced Rate for Seniors

As per Table 3 below, in the 2015/2016 fiscal year, a total of 11,158 Child/Senior monthly transit passes were sold for a total of \$647,164 in revenue. It is unclear what number of these were purchased or used by Seniors or Children, as both groups use the same fare media. If sold at the full adult rate, this would have been a total of \$223,160 in additional revenue in the 2015/2016 fiscal year.

Over the same period, a total of 68,000 sheets of ten tickets were sold at the reduced rate for Seniors or Children for a total of \$986,000 in revenue. If sold at the full adult rate, this would have been \$374,000 in additional revenue in the 2015/2016 fiscal year. Therefore, the total cost of providing discounted pass and ticketed fare media was \$597,000.

As there is no way to determine how many passengers have paid reduced cash fare, there is no accurate way to quantify the potential lost revenue caused by offering a reduced cash fare. Further, there is no

data available to determine the revenue loss incurred by other programs such as the free transit service to seniors on Tuesdays, described above.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications have been assessed as a part of this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was undertaken as a result of this report.

ATTACHMENTS

No attachments.

SOURCES

Statistics Canada. (2016, May 2). Census Profile: Halifax CMA 2011. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, Halifax CMA 2011. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Statistics Canada, 2001 Household Income Deciles Table 1B, 2001. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

Report Prepared by: Erin Harrison, MCIP, LPP Supervisor, Service Design & Projects, Halifax Transit, 902.490.4942



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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Information Item No. 4
Transportation Standing Committee
November 26, 2020

TO: Chair and Members of the Transportation Standing Committee

-Original Signed-

SUBMITTED BY:

Dave Reage, MCIP, LPP, Director, Halifax Transit

-Original Signed-

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: September 25, 2020

SUBJECT: Halifax Transit Fare Strategy 2019 - Seniors Income Level Study

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

On August 13, 2019, during first reading of proposed amendments to By-law U-100, as part of the 2019 Halifax Transit Fare Strategy 2019, Halifax Regional Council requested a supplementary report that shall include but not be limited to detailed study on income levels of seniors who are regular bus users, cost of a free transit for seniors program, and costs of increasing the fare while adopting an enhanced seniors low income pass program.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, R.S.N.S. 2008, section 102 allows Council, by by-law, to prescribe charges for the provision of services for persons who use or benefit from the service, on a basis to be set out in the by-law.

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, R.S.N.S. 2008, subsection 69(1) enables the Municipality to provide a public transportation service.

BACKGROUND

In a staff report dated June 11, 2019 (Attachment A), Halifax Transit recommended a number of fare structure changes. This included a recommendation to eliminate the senior classification and to include those passengers ages 65 and older in the adult classification, and thus requiring full fare payment. This change was proposed as programs such as the Low-Income Transit Pass Program and the partnership with the Department of Community Services are now in place to protect vulnerable seniors, and census data suggests far fewer seniors today are financially vulnerable compared to in the past. While the recommendation to eliminate the senior classification was not adopted, Regional Council did adopt a fare

increase for all classifications. The current fare table and an overview of the two above mentioned transit pass programs are provided below.

Table 1: Current Fare Table

Passenger Classification	Cash	10 Tickets	Monthly Pass
Conventional, Ferry, and Access-A-Bus			
Adult	\$2.75	\$24.75	\$82.50
Senior / Youth	\$2.00	\$18.00	\$60.00
Regional Express¹			
Adult	\$4.25	N/A	\$127.50
Senior / Youth	\$3.00	N/A	\$90.00

Low Income Transit Pass Program

Halifax Transit operates a Low-Income Transit Pass Program as part of HRM's Affordable Access Program. Approved applicants of the Low-Income Transit Pass Program are able to purchase monthly adult transit passes for 50% off the regular price. The discounted price for a conventional Adult Pass is \$41.25, while the rate for a Regional Express pass is \$63.75. The program operates with a limit to the number of participants. In 2020/21 the program was capped at 2,000 residents; however, this limit has not been reached and the program typically operates at around 75% capacity. Eligible residents must live in HRM, have a total annual household income of less than \$35,000 before tax², not receive a Department of Community Services annual transit pass and be over 18 years of age. Note the program does not require applicants to provide their age so the number of seniors participating in this program is not known. At this time, only adult passes are available at a subsidized rate through the Low-Income Transit Pass Program, so qualified seniors may purchase the discounted pass for \$41.25, which is a savings of \$18.75 (31%) off the cost of a regular monthly seniors pass.

Department of Community Services Transit Pass

In 2018, HRM and the Department of Community Services (DCS) launched a partnership to provide annual transit passes to HRM residents and their families who receive income assistance. Income assistance clients within a reasonable distance of the Halifax Transit service area, as well as their spouses and children are eligible to receive a pass. These passes are provided to eligible residents free of charge and DCS provides HRM a payment per month for each pass issued. In 2018, DCS estimated that upwards of 17,000 residents would be eligible to receive a pass within HRM and unlike the LITP, there is no limit to the number of participants in this program. Over the past two years, between 8,000 and 10,000 annual passes have been in circulation each month.

Based on the 2016 census data, roughly 0.6% of all seniors in HRM (about 370 seniors) received income assistance from DCS. In 2019/20, approximately 360 income assistance recipients 65 and over were eligible for the DCS transit pass in Halifax, and about 70% (approximately 260) participated in the program and received an annual transit pass at no cost to them.

DISCUSSION

This supplemental report aims to provide additional demographic information related to income levels, seniors, and transit use within HRM. This is achieved through an assessment of broader demographic trends in HRM, the province and the country, various low-income measures, and coupled with an analysis of Halifax Transit's fare revenue and existing programs to provide insight into senior income levels and senior transit ridership. However, note that this analysis is somewhat limited due to the fact the Municipality

¹ An adult with a ticket, monthly pass, UPass or transfer pay an additional \$1.50; A senior or youth with a ticket, monthly pass, UPass or transfer pay an additional \$1.00 on Regional Express Routes.

² Note this amount is adjusted annually.

does not have data regarding the income levels of transit passengers, and has limited data available on transit passenger demographics.

Seniors in Halifax

There are currently more than 71,000 seniors within the Halifax region, which is approximately 16% of the overall population. The number of seniors has been steadily growing in HRM, both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the total population.

Table 2: Estimated Total and Senior Population in Halifax Over Time³

Population	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
Total	393,700	402,100	405,600	408,000	421,900	440,300
Seniors (65+)	48,500	51,300	56,400	60,700	65,600	71,300
Seniors (65+) as % of total	12.3%	12.8%	13.9%	14.9%	15.5%	16.2%

Senior Transit Ridership

The existing passenger counter and fare collection systems do not have the capability to collect demographic information such as the age or income of passengers. Thus, any estimation as to the proportion of seniors that use transit must rely on Statistics Canada census data, complemented by available literature on senior transit usage. The 2016 census indicated that 8% of all seniors in Halifax (who worked) used transit to commute. However, this data does not reflect the local travel choices made by the presumed majority of seniors in the Halifax region, who are no longer in the workforce. A more comprehensive dataset from Montreal yields a senior transit mode share range between 5% and 12%.⁴ Looking more broadly, Statistics Canada produced a 2012 report which profiled seniors' transportation habits, including all trip types. Again, senior transit usage ranged between roughly 4% to 9% depending on the age and sex of the respondents.⁵ As a result, a reasonable estimate of the total number of seniors who use Halifax Transit is 5% to 10% of all seniors or 3,500 to 7,000 senior riders.

Senior Income Trends and Low-Income Measures

Different agencies and levels of government use varying thresholds or metrics to identify an individual or household as low income. The following section describes several of these metrics which collectively provide insight into the financial well-being of seniors within HRM, relative to other age groups and contextualize any potential demand for an enhanced low-income senior transit pass program.

Median Income of Seniors

Median senior income, as measured by Statistics Canada, has risen significantly over the last 40 years. Figure 1 depicts the change in income in Canada and Nova Scotia using 2018 dollars.

³ Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0135-01 Population estimates, July 1, by census metropolitan area and census agglomeration, 2016 boundaries.

⁴ Fordham, L., Grise, E., El-Geneidy, A., When I'm 64: Assessing Generational Differences in Public Transit Use of Seniors in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board, No. 2651, 2017, pp. 31-41.

⁵ Statistics Canada. Profile of seniors' transportation habits. 2012.

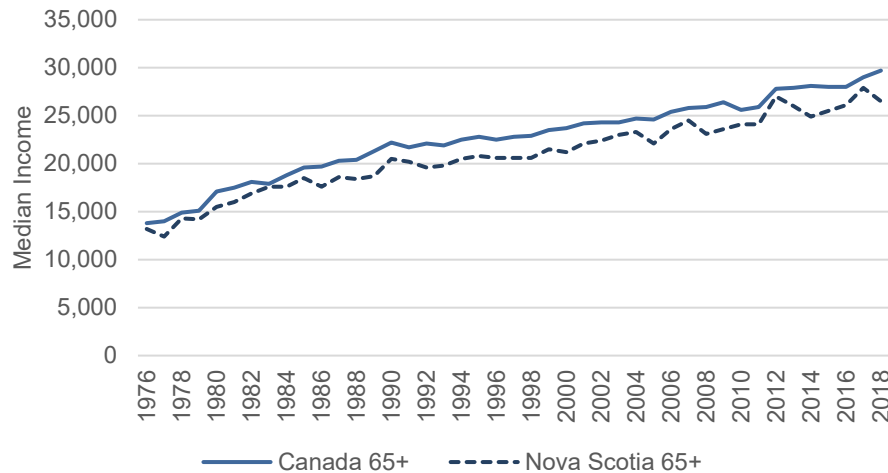


Figure 1: Seniors Median Income 1976 to 2018 (2018 constant dollars)⁶

Figure 2 shows the change in median income for six cohorts within Nova Scotia. Notably, the real median income for Nova Scotian seniors (65+) has doubled from \$13,200 to \$26,500 over the past 40 years. So, while the median income of seniors used to be comparable to the youth cohort (16 to 24), it is now significantly higher, and the gap between seniors and other, typically higher earning cohorts has been closing steadily.

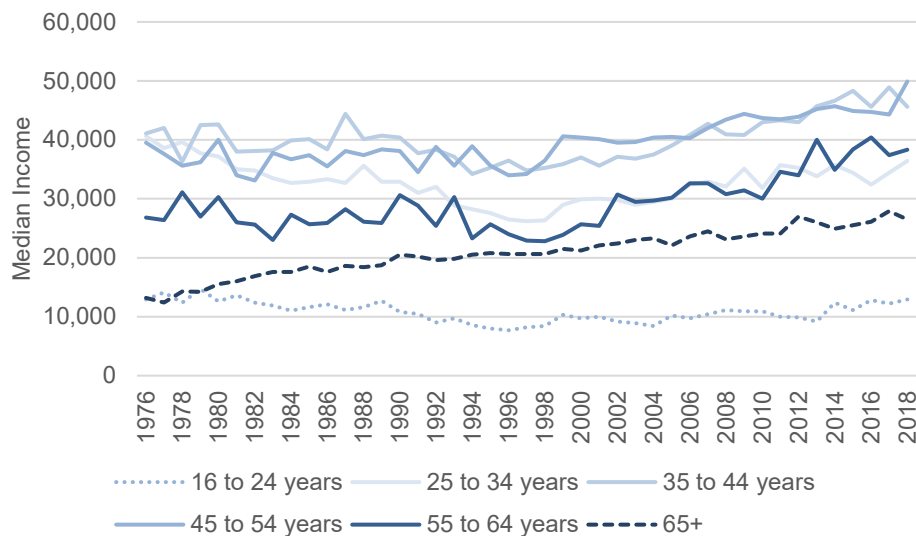


Figure 2: Median Income 1976 to 2018 Nova Scotia (2018 constant dollars)⁷

Low Income Measures and Low-Income Seniors

In addition to the information provided above, Statistics Canada also reports on multiple measures to help assess the number of low-income individuals in geographic regions. Some of the most widely available data can be found in the low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT) and the low income, cut-offs, after tax (LICO-AT). The LIM-AT is a more complex calculation that determines a low-income threshold based on 50% of median-adjusted after-tax household income. By contrast, the LICO-AT refers to an income threshold, below which individuals or economic families are expected to devote a larger than average share

⁶ Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0239-01 Income of individuals by age group, sex and income source, Canada, provinces and selected census metropolitan areas.

⁷ Ibid.

of their after-tax income to necessities such as food, shelter and clothing. Income cut-offs vary based on the size of the household and the size of the community or municipality in which the households reside.

Tables 3 and 4 provide LIM-AT and LICO-AT data on the number of residents in HRM, by age (youth, adults and seniors) as well as the percentage of the population that these low-income measures apply to.⁸ The data suggests that overall, seniors face fewer income challenges relative to other cohorts in HRM.

Table 3: LIM-AT Comparison Between Cohorts in HRM (2016)⁹

Age	HRM population by age in low income based on LIM-AT	Prevalence of low income in HRM by age based on LIM-AT
< 18	13,695	18.8%
18 to 64	38,000	14.3%
Seniors (65+)	7,135	12.0%

Table 4: LICO-AT Comparison Between Cohorts in HRM (2016)¹⁰

Age	HRM population by age low income based on LICO-AT	Prevalence of low income in HRM by age based on based on LICO-AT
< 18	7,790	10.7%
18 to 64	28,875	10.9%
Seniors (65+)	1,570	2.6%

Historical data on these low-income measures is also available for Nova Scotia and Canada, but not HRM alone. Historical charts are included for reference in Attachment B to this report. Similar to the historical median income data presented above, the historical low-income charts show the prevalence of low-income seniors in Nova Scotia and Canada has reduced substantially over time and the LICO-AT has continued to decrease up until 2018.

Total Household Income by Age

In addition to assessing the prevalence of low-income measures by age, total household income (before tax) by age can provide additional insight into the status of HRM seniors relative to other age cohorts. Figures 4 and 5 provide data for five cohorts across five income quintiles in 2001 and 2011. Total household income for 2016, by cohort was not available for Halifax, however, Figure 6 does provide some insight into the change in senior household income between 2011 and 2016. These three figures demonstrate that the prevalence of seniors in the lowest income quintile reduced substantially between 2001 and 2011 and then plateaued in 2016. Of further note, the under 25 cohort had the highest percentage of residents within the lowest quintile, at 50% in both 2001 and 2011.

⁸ Note the total senior population estimates in Table 2 do not correspond directly to the estimates in Tables 3 and 4. These figures vary slightly, likely due to Statistics Canada random rounding.

⁹ Statistics Canada. 2017. Halifax, RGM [Census subdivision], Nova Scotia and Canada [Country] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.

¹⁰ Ibid.

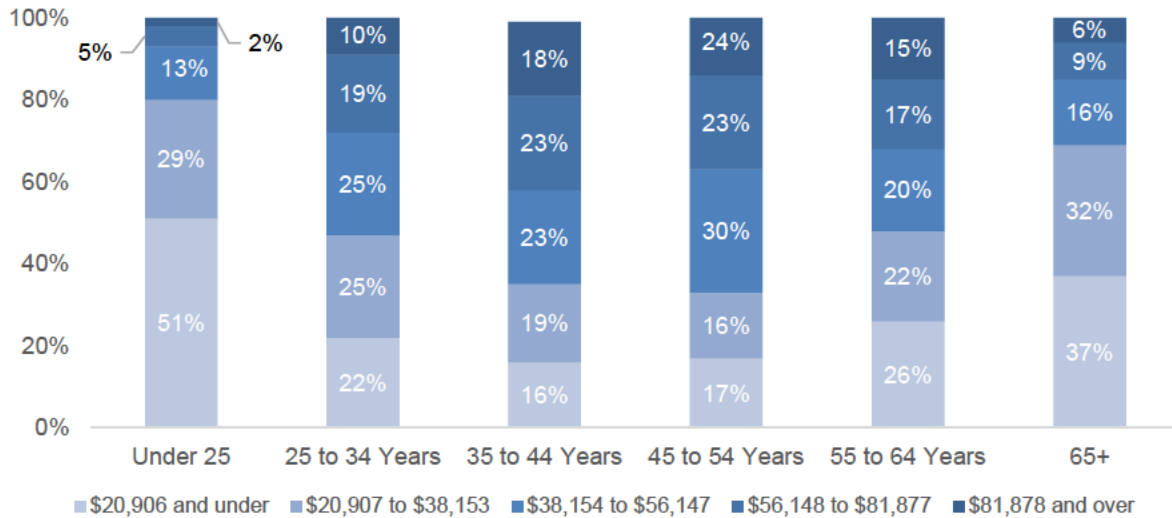


Figure 4: Total Household Income by Age (2001)¹¹

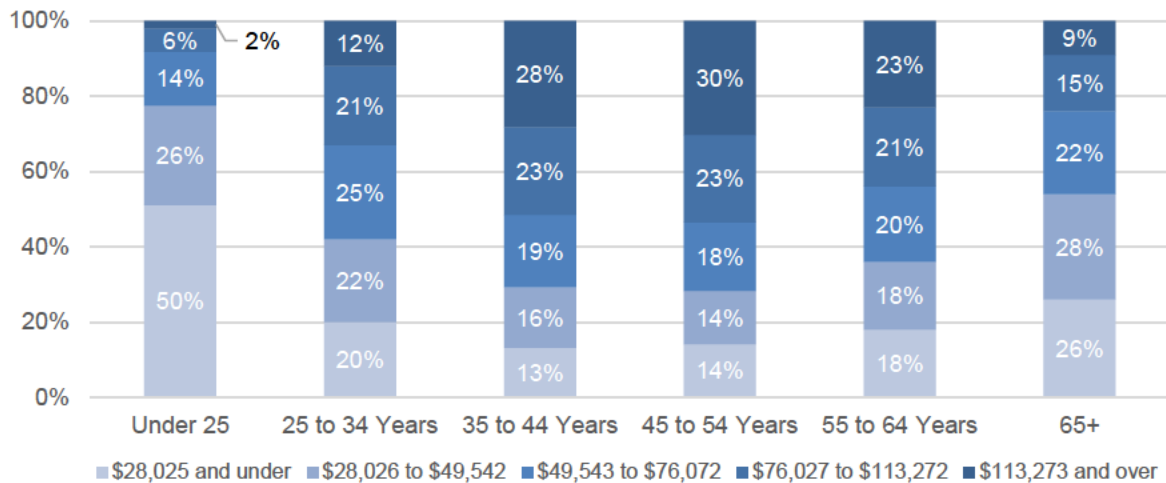


Figure 5: Total Household Income by Age (2011)¹²

¹¹ SHS Consulting. Halifax Housing Needs Assessment Final Report. 2015.

¹² Ibid.

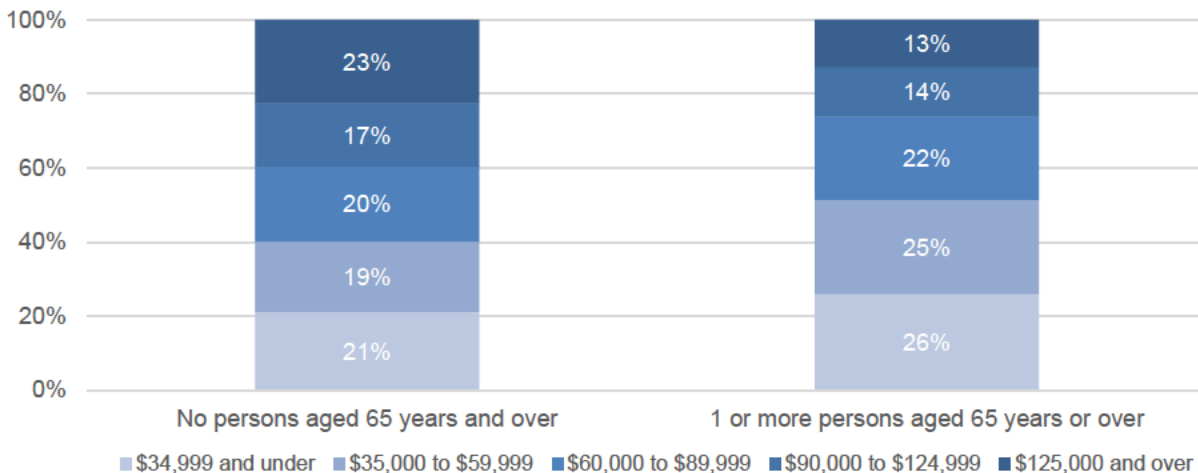


Figure 5: Total Household Income of Households with and without Seniors (2016)¹³

HRM Low Income Measure

HRM currently delivers multiple programs under the umbrella of the Affordable Access Program, which includes the Low-Income Transit Pass Program. To determine eligibility in these low-income programs, HRM adopted a total household income (before tax) threshold that is based on a Statistics Canada low income, cut-off calculation for a typical three-person household. This threshold is specific to municipalities with 100,000 to 499,999 residents and is adjusted annually.

The household income threshold used by HRM in both 2017/18 and 2018/19 was \$33,000 per household. This threshold was then increased to \$34,000 per household in 2019/20 and \$35,000 in 2020/21. These recent program thresholds align well with the lowest income category in Figure 5. In fact, the 26% of all households with 1 or more persons aged 65 years or over which have a total income of \$34,999 and under represents over 11,000 households. This demonstrates that HRM's current low-income measure allows for more potential seniors to participate in the Low-Income Transit Pass Program than if the Municipality's income threshold was based on the LICO-AT (1,570 seniors) or the LIM-AT (7,135 seniors). In other words, the Municipality's current low-income threshold includes more seniors than other standard measures would identify as low-income.

Low Income Senior Transit Users

As the Municipality does not have access to a comprehensive dataset that includes age, income and transit ridership, there is no way to accurately determine the income levels of seniors who are regular transit users but analyzing demographic data within the Urban Transit Service Boundary (UTSB) provides some insights. While seniors represent a slightly higher proportion of the total HRM population within the UTSB in 2016, there are fewer seniors that are identified as low income when compared to other cohorts.¹⁴ This suggests, the proportion of seniors facing income challenges in the UTSB is lower than that of the broader HRM population, that seniors, in general face fewer income challenges relative to other cohorts in the areas served by transit, and perhaps less likely to be reliant on transit.

The notion that seniors within the UTSB face fewer income challenges and are potentially relatively less reliant on transit than other age groups is somewhat reinforced through an evaluation of the weekday ridership and more specifically the Tuesday ridership when seniors are eligible to travel for free between 10 AM and 3 PM, and again after 6 PM. The average ridership by day, but excluding holidays is shown in the Figures 6 and 7.

¹³ Statistics Canada. 2016 Census. Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016097.

¹⁴ In 2016, 86.5% of HRM's overall population in low income based on the LIM-AT and 92.3% of HRM's overall population in low income based on the LICO-AT lived in the UTSB. Comparatively, 80.2% of all seniors in low income based on the LIM-AT and 89.2% of all seniors in low income based on the LICO-AT lived in the UTSB.

These two figures demonstrate that even though Seniors ride for free, Tuesday ridership is only slightly higher than the weekday average but is still comparable to Fridays where there isn't any free service offered. This comparison suggests that few seniors are using transit solely on Tuesdays because the service is free.

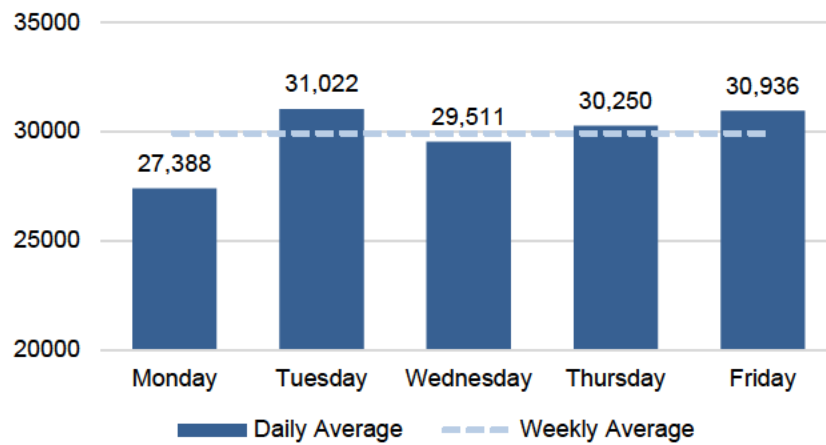


Figure 6: Midday Transit Ridership (April to September 2019)

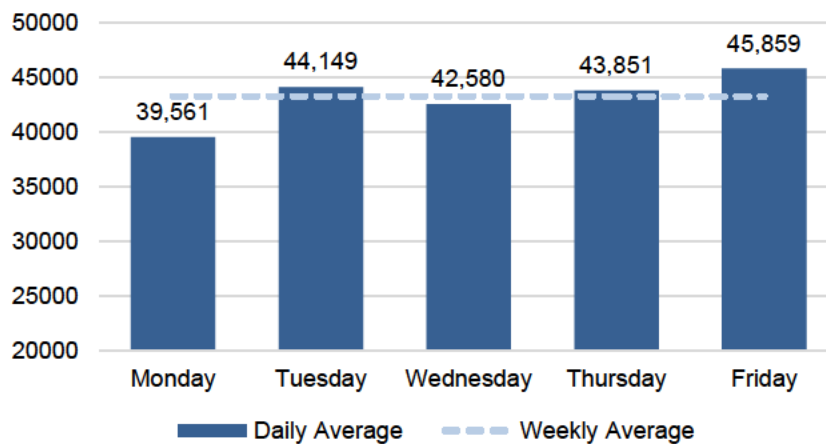


Figure 7: Midday and Evening Transit Ridership (April to September 2019)

Exploration of Options to Further Subsidize Senior Transit Fare

This section discusses two options which could offer seniors more significantly reduced fares, either based on age alone, or based on household income.

Free Transit for Seniors

The estimated annualized fare revenue for the new youth / senior category with children under 12 riding for free was \$2.4 million. While it is not possible to know exactly what portion of tickets or passes are purchased for youth or for seniors, staff estimate that seniors account for roughly two-thirds of the ridership in this fare category. Thus, making transit free for all seniors is estimated to reduce revenue by \$1.6 million annually.

Enhanced Low Income Senior Transit Pass Program

For the purposes of this report, an enhanced low-income senior transit pass program is assumed to provide a pass to low income seniors at a discount that is similar to that of the current Low-Income Transit Pass or the DCS Transit Pass. This pass could be applied for on an annual basis and the passes could be provided as monthly or annual passes. In this situation, those seniors that would not qualify for this enhanced pass

would pay the regular, adult fare. As noted above, the Municipality does not have access to a comprehensive dataset that includes age, income and transit ridership. Thus, there is no way to accurately determine the total potential participants or the cost of an enhanced low-income senior transit pass program, however staff have explored some scenarios in the development of this report.

As the estimated revenue impact is dependent on many variables, including:

- The number of existing senior transit users participating in the current transit pass programs;
- The number of seniors that may move from tickets or a youth/senior monthly pass to an enhanced low income senior transit pass if available;
- If seniors retain a discounted cash fare and other fare media or not if an enhanced low income program is introduced.

Due to the number of variables at play, staff determined that the revenue impact of this program could range from a revenue loss of \$400,000 per year, to a revenue increase of \$200,000 per year. While the estimated revenue impact of an enhanced low-income senior transit pass program is relatively low compared to the annual revenue generated by Halifax Transit, consideration must be given to the fact that there is still capacity within the existing low-income programs, such as the Low-Income Transit Pass Program. This excess capacity suggests there is not necessarily any latent demand or additional need for an enhanced low-income senior transit pass program at this time.

Summary

The data presented in this report demonstrate that the median income of seniors has risen substantially over the last 40 years, and within HRM, seniors are, in general, less likely to face income challenges relative to other cohorts. This is especially evident in the comparison of senior income to those under 25 years of age. The evaluation of this income data, in combination with the excess capacity in the Low-Income Transit Pass Program suggests that the existing programs and supports can meet the current needs of most low-income seniors. Thus, continuing to direct resources to programs and partnerships which support low income residents based on need and not age is anticipated to be beneficial to the Municipality. However, should Council wish to modify the senior fare category in any manner, including reducing or removing fares, creating a new senior low-income transit pass, or otherwise, an amendment to By-law U-100, the *User Charges By-law* would be required.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications are outlined above within the discussion. A free transit program for seniors is anticipated to reduce revenue by \$1.6 million annually. An enhanced low-income senior transit pass program could represent an annual revenue impact of between -\$400,000 and +\$200,000.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was undertaken as this study was informed by available census data and data gathered from previous surveys.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Staff report dated June 11, 2019 – Amendments to By-law U-100 - Halifax Transit Fare Strategy

Attachment B – Historical Trends of Low-Income Measures

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Dave Espeseth, Coordinator, Project Planning, Halifax Transit, 902.497.5139

Report Approved by: Patricia Hughes, MCIP, LPP, Manager, Planning & Customer Engagement, Halifax Transit, 902.490.6287

HALIFAX

P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No.
Transportation Standing Committee
July 25, 2019

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Dave Reage, MCIP, LPP, Director Halifax Transit

Original Signed

Chief Stuebing, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 11, 2019

SUBJECT: Amendments to By-law U-100 - Halifax Transit Fare Strategy 2019

ORIGIN

This report originates from:

1. Halifax Transit Draft Multi-Year Budget & Business Plan 2019/2020 and 2020/2021, presented to the Budget Committee on January 30, 2019 which recommended a fare increase to cover the increase to Halifax Transit's operating budget for 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.
2. At the October 25, 2018 meeting of the Transportation Standing Committee, the following motion was passed:

The Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report on the feasibility of:

- i. Implementing a Transit Pass Program similar to Kingston, Ontario's that would provide a bus pass to all high school students along with orientation sessions at schools;
- ii. Increasing the age that children ride free until from 5 to 16 as part of the fare strategy.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, R.S.N.S. 2008, section 102 allows Council, by by-law, to prescribe charges for the provision of services for persons who use or benefit from the service, on a basis to be set out in the by-law.

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, R.S.N.S. 2008, subsection 69(1) enables the Municipality to provide a public transportation service, and clause 79(1)(o) provides authority for Council to expend money to provide public transportation.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council:

1. Adopt By-law U-105, the purpose of which is to amend Schedule 1 of By-law U-100, the User Charges By-law, establishing changes to the existing fare structure and fares as set out in Attachment C to this report.
2. Direct the CAO to begin planning a Student Transit Pass pilot program by meeting with HRCE and CSAP officials to discuss potential partnership opportunities, program details, timelines, logistics, marketing and costs.
3. Direct the CAO to prepare a report investigating the feasibility of implementing a fee for access to Halifax Transit Park & Rides.

BACKGROUND

Halifax Transit fares

Halifax Transit's standard adult fare was last increased (from \$2.25 to \$2.50) on September 30, 2013. Before the increase in 2013, the standard adult fare was increased (from \$2.00 to \$2.25) on July 1, 2009. Before the increase in 2009, the standard adult fare was increased (from \$1.75 to \$2.00) in January 2005.

Halifax Transit's approved Multi-Year Budget & Business Plan 2019/2020 and 2020/2021, includes a 25-cent fare increase to assist in funding Halifax Transit operating costs in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. The increase in Halifax Transit's operating budget for 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 is due to several factors including, but not limited to, increased wages, increased cost of fuel, service increases associated with the *Moving Forward Together Plan*, etc.

The proposed 25-cent fare increase has been approved by Regional Council as part of the 2019/2020 budget; however, specifics of the rollout of the fare increase were not in place at that time.

Student Transit Pass Program

At present, the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) offers passes to qualified students who are outside of the established walking distance, but for whom school busing is not an option. Each month, they provide 750 – 900 passes to students at six schools. These are provided by Halifax Transit at the rate of \$50 per pass per month.

DISCUSSION

Halifax Transit fares

Change in approach

Historically, Halifax Transit has considered fare increases as required and applied fare increases uniformly (e.g. a 10% increase of all passenger classifications, for all products/media, across all services). With technology changes coming (electronic fares), Halifax Transit is changing the approach to fare increases to focus more on industry best-practices, strategic goals and planning for the future in an effort to increase ridership, reduce cash handling, and provide more options and convenience to passengers.

Jurisdictional scan

Jurisdictions in the first table were selected based on fleet size and/or population data in range with Halifax Transit's fleet size and/or population. The second table includes Atlantic Canadian jurisdictions with greater than twenty buses. Data source is the *CUTA DATA Canadian Transit Fact Book, 2016 Operating Data*, published November 2017 (except where indicated ↑ for increases and ↓ for decreases

from CUTA data, based on current fares published on jurisdictions' websites). Sorted by Adult Cash Fare, lowest to highest.

The cells highlighted in red indicate the jurisdictions lowest in their category and cells highlighted in yellow indicate where Halifax Transit is second-lowest in the category.

Jurisdictions Based on Fleet Size / Population	R/C Ratio	Adult Cash Fare	Adult Monthly Pass	Child Cash Fare	Child Monthly Pass	Senior Cash Fare	Senior Monthly Pass	Buses	Municipal Population	Service Area Population
Canada	54%	\$3.02	\$81.67	\$2.48	\$54.67	\$2.66	\$51.51	16,450	23,990,515	22,973,041
Pop. 400,001 - 2,000,000	44%	\$3.38	\$101.34	\$3.13	\$68.50	\$2.78	\$51.50	7,047	9,613,239	9,132,022
Pop. 150,001 - 400,000	41%	\$3.37	\$97.17	\$2.21	\$52.67	\$3.06	\$54.02	1,693	2,538,206	2,371,963
Halifax, NS	35%	\$2.50	\$78.00	\$1.75	\$58.00	\$1.75	\$58.00	323	425,871	316,780
Victoria, BC	46%	\$2.50	\$85.00	\$2.50	\$45.00	\$2.50	\$45.00	282	367,770	314,696
London, Ont	52%	\$2.75	\$81.00	\$0.00↓		\$2.75	\$57.50	206	385,100	385,100
Hamilton, Ont	50%	\$3.00	\$105.60↑	\$3.00	\$88.00↑	\$3.00	\$29.50↑	251	536,917	490,673
Waterloo Region, Ont	39%	\$3.25	\$86.00↑	\$3.25	\$73.00↑	\$3.25	\$73.00↑	249	541,395	452,684
Laval, Que	33%	\$3.25	\$95.00↑	\$3.25	\$57.00↑	\$3.25	\$57.00↑	306	430,077	430,077
Longueuil, Que	42%	\$3.25	\$98.50↑	\$3.25	\$58.50↑	\$3.25	\$58.50↑	444	419,677	419,677
Mississauga, Ont	48%	\$3.75↑				\$1.00		467	764,300	764,300
Durham Region, Ont	39%	\$3.75	\$117.00↑	\$2.50	\$65.00	\$2.50	\$46.00	186	673,075	567,421
Brampton, Ont	46%	\$4.00↑	\$124.00↑	\$4.00↑	\$105.00	\$1.00	\$52.00	407	593,638	588,200
Gatineau, Que	43%	\$4.00↑	\$97.00↑			\$2.60	\$41.00↑	364	278,589	278,589
York Region, Ont	40%	\$4.00	\$150.00↑	\$4.00	\$63.00↑	\$4.00	\$63.00↑	539	1,186,907	1,083,442
Averages for Jurisdictions	43%	\$3.41	\$103.91	\$2.86	\$69.31	\$2.65	\$52.25	336	561,586	524,987

Atlantic Canadian Jurisdictions > 20 Buses	R/C Ratio	Adult Cash Fare	Adult Monthly Pass	Child Cash Fare	Child Monthly Pass	Senior Cash Fare	Senior Monthly Pass	Buses	Municipal Population	Service Area Population
Halifax, NS	35%	\$2.50	\$78.00	\$1.75	\$58.00	\$1.75	\$58.00	323	425,871	316,780
Moncton, NB	38%	\$2.50↑	\$64.00↑	\$2.50↑	\$49.00↑	\$2.50↑	\$49.00↑	31	116,940	116,940
St. John's, NL	29%	\$2.50↑	\$78.00↑	\$2.00↑	\$53.00↑	\$2.50↑	\$53.00↑	42	153,400	137,590
Saint John, NB	47%	\$2.75	\$77.00	\$2.50	\$66.00	\$2.50	\$55.00	42	120,000	100,420
Fredericton, NB	39%	\$2.75	\$80.00	\$2.75		\$2.75	\$50.00	25	58,220	58,220
Averages for Jurisdictions	38%	\$2.63	\$74.75	\$2.44	\$56.00	\$2.56	\$52.33	35	112,140	103,293

Some key observations and implications from the jurisdictional scan:

Key Observation	Implication
Jurisdictions Based on Fleet Size / Population	
1. Halifax Transit is tied for lowest Adult Cash Fare, \$0.85 lower than average for evaluated jurisdictions.	Fares should be increased to be more in-line with similar jurisdictions and a plan should be put in place for periodic increases in the future.
2. Halifax Transit has second lowest Child Cash Fare, \$1.23 lower than average for evaluated jurisdictions.	

Key Observation	Implication
3. Halifax Transit has lowest cost Adult Monthly Pass, \$22.47 lower than average for evaluated jurisdictions.	Monthly passes need to be more competitive relative to tickets. Current pricing requires too many trips for the monthly pass to be a better value than tickets.
4. Halifax Transit's Child Monthly Pass is \$9.45 lower than average for evaluated jurisdictions.	
5. All 11 evaluated jurisdictions offer at least one electronic fare media payment option.	Halifax Transit should implement an electronic fare media payment option.
Atlantic Canadian Jurisdictions with > 20 Buses	
6. Halifax Transit is in a similar position relative to Canadian jurisdictions when compared to other Atlantic Canadian jurisdictions.	Even in similar economic conditions, Halifax Transit has relatively low fares. Fares should be increased to be more in-line with similar jurisdictions.

Halifax Transit passenger classifications (fare categories):

Current Passenger Classifications		Recommended Passenger Classifications	
Halifax Transit currently classifies passengers based on age or school criteria.		Halifax Transit recommends that passenger classifications be changed in the following ways.	
Adult	non-students aged 16 - 64	Adult	Change the age to 18+
Senior	aged 65+		Eliminate the senior fare; to be included under Adult fare
Child	aged 5 - 15	Youth	Change the age range to 5 - 17 (13 - 17 for the duration of the pilot to offer free travel to children 12 and under) and combine with the Student fare classification.
Student	full-time student with valid student ID		Eliminate the Student fare classification

Significant changes are recommended to the passenger classifications.

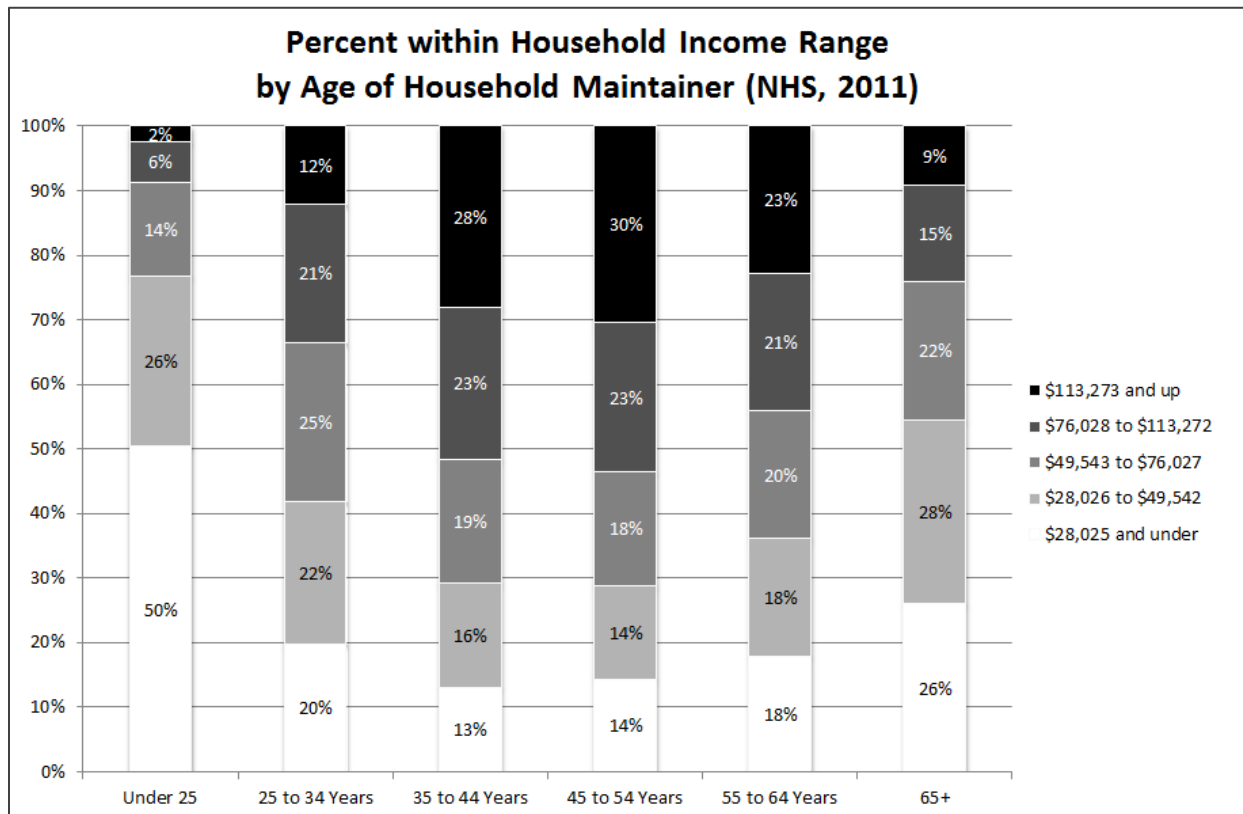
The first major change is to implement a pilot program whereby the age limit for free travel on Halifax Transit is raised from 4 and under to 12 and under. The pilot would begin on September 30, 2019 along with the new fares. The pilot would last 6 months, allowing Halifax Transit staff to gauge the long-term impact to both ridership and to Halifax Transit's operating budget. The jurisdictional scan has indicated that many agencies are increasing the age limit at which children ride free as allowing easy access to public transit for more children encourages the use of public transportation which will ideally lead to continued use into adulthood. At the conclusion of the pilot, Halifax Transit will analyze the impact of the pilot to revenue. If the pilot demonstrates a loss of revenue that is acceptable to Regional Council, the change could be made permanent in the future.

Because of the changes recommended to the former Child classification, a new Youth classification should be created to replace the 13-15 range of the former Child classification and be expanded to 17, also eliminating the need for a separate Student classification as it would be redundant.

The Senior classification should be eliminated and included in the Adult classification. As found in the jurisdictional scan, many other jurisdictions do not have a separate fare for seniors. If the implied intent of the Senior classification was to protect seniors with less available funds to use for travel, Halifax Transit now has other programs in place to protect vulnerable seniors (such as free travel for seniors on Tuesdays, the low-income transit pass program, and the ESIA pass program).

The 2011 National Household Survey compiled the average household income of Halifax residents grouped by the age of the primary household maintainer. The data is broken into income deciles, grouped below in Figure 1. Figure 1 details the breakdown of average household income by primary household maintainer's age as of 2011. Figure 2 illustrates the same data as of 2001. The household income breakdown in 2011 indicates that of households in Halifax where the primary household maintainer is 65 years old or older, approximately 26% have an average household income of \$28,025 or less, below the Halifax Low Income Index which in 2011 was \$30,000 per household.

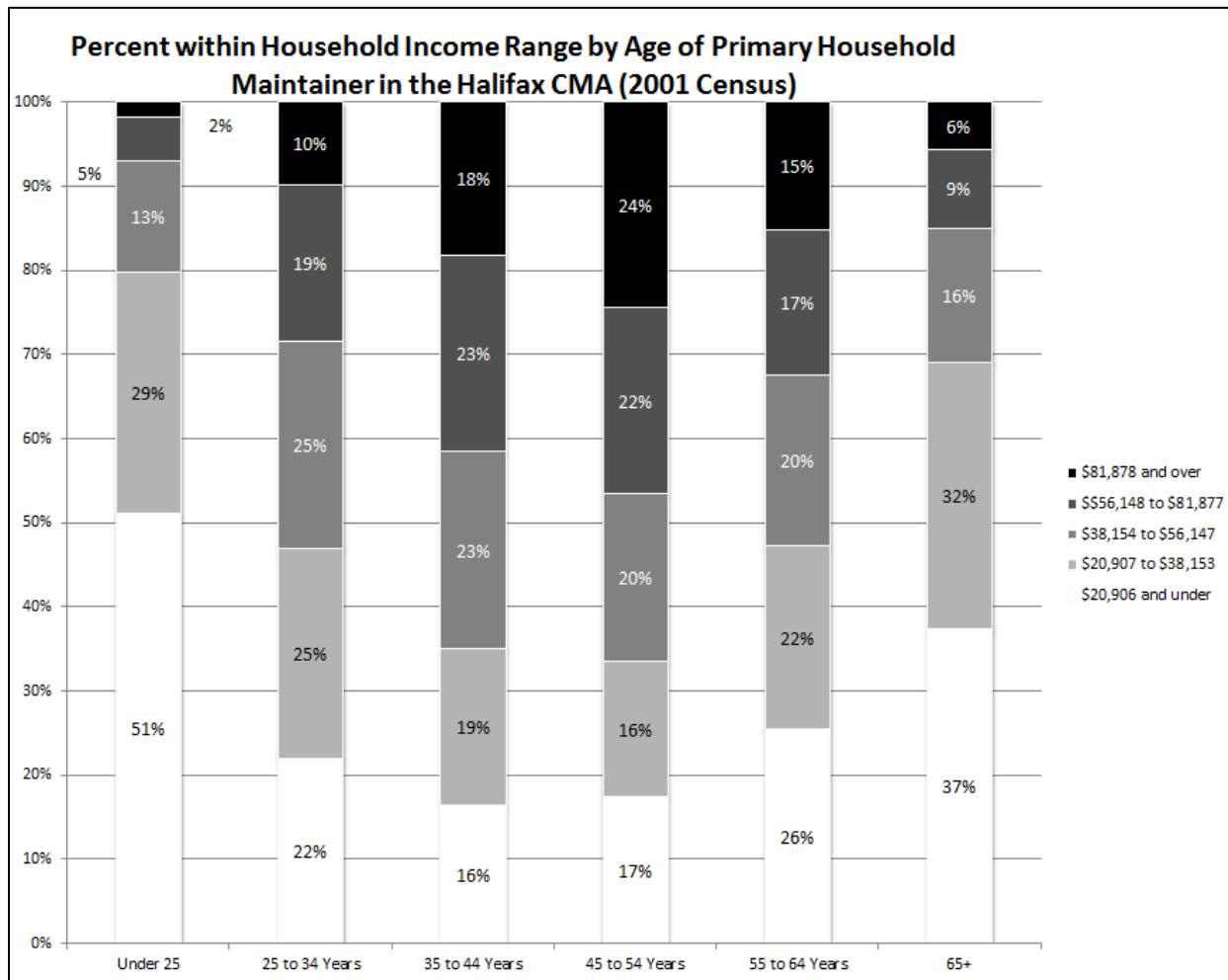
Figure 1: Income Range by Age of Household Maintainer (2011)



The oldest age cohort is overrepresented in the lowest income category when compared to households led by maintainers in other age cohorts between the ages of 25 and 64. However, households with a maintainer under the age of 25 are at least twice as likely to be in the lowest income category when compared to any other age cohort.

Figure 2 details the breakdown of average household income by primary household maintainer's age as of 2001. Similar to 2011, the household income breakdown in 2001 indicates that of households in Halifax where the primary household maintainer is 65 years old or older, approximately 37% have an average household income of \$20,906 or less, and 57% have an average household income of below \$29,460.

Figure 2: Income Range by Age of Household Maintainer (2001)



Based on an income threshold of approximately \$30,000 per household or less, between 2001 and 2011, the number of Senior-led households that fell within this category declined from 57% in 2001 to 26% in 2011. Over the same period, the number of seniors residing in Halifax has increased by 29%, indicating that while the number of Seniors is increasing, so too is the average household income of this age cohort. While Seniors are overrepresented in the lowest two income categories (i.e. more than 20% of households of fall into each of the lowest income categories), so too are other age cohorts.

Because the impacts to revenue of both the change to the age at which children are able to ride free (the pilot) and the elimination of the senior classification approximately offset, both are recommended together. Implementing one change but not the other would represent a significant change to Halifax Transit’s revenue (as indicated in the financial implications section).

Halifax Transit fare products and fare media

Currently, Halifax Transit offers several ways for passengers to pay a fare. The following is a listing of all methods a passenger could potentially pay a fare when boarding a Halifax Transit bus/ferry along with recommendations for their continued use and potential new methods:

Current Fare Products & Fare Media	Recommended Fare Products & Fare Media
Cash CDN and US coins and banknotes	Continue the use of cash for the foreseeable future but encourage other, preferred fare media.
Paper tickets visual inspection Adult and Senior/Child single ride	Continue the use of tickets for the foreseeable future with the goal of eliminating in favour of electronic fare media.
Paper transfers visual inspection	Continue the use of paper transfers for the foreseeable future with the goal of eliminating in favour of electronic fare media.
Monthly pass paper flash-pass (MetroPass, MetroLink Pass, MetroX Pass)	Replace current monthly passes with account based electronic fare media (smart card, mobile tap/flash). Continue the use of current flash-pass until this is implemented.
UPass plastic flash-pass	Replace current plastic flash pass with account based electronic fare media. Continue the use of current flash pass until this is implemented.
EPass annual plastic flash-pass photo of user printed on pass	Replace current plastic flash pass with account based electronic fare media. Continue the use of current flash pass until this is implemented.
ESIA pass annual plastic flash-pass (DCS) photo of user printed on pass	Replace current plastic flash pass with account based electronic fare media. Continue the use of current flash pass until this is implemented.
HRCE student pass annual flash pass	Continue and possibly expand the program
	Electronic fare Media (Smart Card/Mobile) – Any electronic fare media should be an e-Purse/account-based solution, so Halifax Transit can offer loyalty/best value programs and day/multiple day passes to riders.
	Contactless Bank Card – In the future, implement contactless bank card tap payment.

Halifax Transit public concessionary fare policies:

Current Concessionary Fare Policies	Recommended Concessionary Fare Policies
UPass discounted pass for full-time post-secondary students 4-month, 8-month, and 9-month programs	Continue the UPass program but rates should be increased to be more in-line with other jurisdictions.
EPass discounted annual pass available to SmartTrip employers paid through payroll deduction cost 87.5% of 12 monthly passes	Continue the EPass program. Eliminate premium fare options and allow base EPass users to use the pass for any fare type.
Low income transit pass monthly pass at 50% discount	Allow for incremental expansion of the program.
Child aged < 5 - free	Continue but change age to children < 13 ride free after a pilot is conducted to understand the budgetary impact of this change.
Free Park & Ride	Conduct a study to evaluate implementing a fee to park in Park & Ride lots
Visually impaired free with valid CNIB card	Continue unchanged.
Seniors free on Tuesday from 10:00am to 3:30PM and after 6:00PM	Continue unchanged.
Personal Care attendant with AAB client free	Continue unchanged.
Refugee 1-year settlement support program free WIH pass	Continue unchanged.
Ferry: Canada Day, Natal Day, New Year's Eve after 6 PM free	Continue unchanged.
Other – special events volunteers, etc. free	Continue on a case-by-case basis.

An investigation into the feasibility of implementing a fee for access to Halifax Transit Park & Rides should be conducted. This would address the issue of Halifax Transit Park & Ride lots quickly filling with non-users of Halifax Transit at the expense of passengers. An example where this is currently an issue is the Woodside Ferry Terminal parking lot.

Halifax Transit transfer policy

A transfer allows passengers to connect to other buses or ferries to complete a trip without paying an additional fare. Transfers are valid for up to 90 minutes after the last time point on the route on which the transfer was received. If a transfer is needed, it must be requested by the passenger when boarding the bus or ferry. Transfers are available on all routes and Access-A-Bus passengers may also request transfers.

Current Transfer Policies	Recommended Transfer Policies
Issued when paying fare	Continue unchanged.
Valid for 90 minutes after end of route	Continue unchanged.
Valid on all HT routes and services	Continue to accept transfers on all Halifax Transit routes and services. Continue to require an additional fee when using a transfer from conventional service to premium service. There may be special cases where transfers would not be valid such as special event services, etc.
Passenger requests transfer upon boarding	Continue unchanged.
Additional fares for MetroLink, MetroX and Airport	MetroLink is being eliminated. Continue unchanged for MetroX and Airport.

Halifax Transit service tiers:

Current service tiers		Recommended service tiers	
Standard Fare	Conventional bus Ferry Access-A-Bus	Standard Fare	Continue unchanged.
Limited-Stop	MetroLink		MetroLink premium fare is being eliminated.
Regional Express	MetroX	Regional Express	Continue unchanged.
		Airport	Airport cash fare to be increased to \$6.

Very few changes are recommended for the current service tiers other than the elimination of the MetroLink premium fare and an increase to the cash fare for the Route 320 Airport/Fall River.

The MetroLink premium fare is being eliminated, as it will no longer be required over the longer term. There are currently only two MetroLink routes, the 185 Sackville Link and 159 Portland Hills Link. The *Moving Forward Together Plan* includes the redesign of transit routes and services, including the replacement of existing MetroLink routes with new express routes.

In November 2019, the Route 185 Sackville Link will be discontinued and replaced with the express routes 183, 185, and 186. Between the Sackville Terminal and Scotia Square, these routes will provide the same frequent, express services as currently provided by the Route 185. However, they will start/end their trips in residential communities, allowing more passengers access to express service, and will also travel beyond Scotia Square, bringing passengers closer to other downtown destinations.

As the Route 159 will be the only remaining MetroLink route, and there are plans to change this route as part of the *Moving Forward Together Plan*, and premium MetroLink vehicles are being retired and the route is often serviced with a standard conventional vehicle, it is recommended that the premium MetroLink fare be discontinued as part of the upcoming fare changes.

The Route 320 Airport/Fall River serves both commuters and occasional travelers. As identified in the *Moving Forward Together Plan*, this route provides a regionally significant connection from a tourism and economic development perspective and as such is exempt from minimum ridership guidelines. This route provides a significantly higher level of service than other Regional Express routes, operating consistently all day, seven days a week.

To reflect the reduced ridership expectations, higher level of service, and resulting higher level of cost to operate this service, a higher cash/single rider fare is appropriate. A jurisdictional scan was completed, and the proposed single ride fare is \$6, which is considered more reflective of the value of service to travelers. All other fare medium (tickets, passes, etc.) will remain consistent with other Regional Express service, so as to not impact commuters or frequent travelers.

Fare table

See Attachment A of this report.

Student Transit Pass Program

Halifax Transit staff has been asked to explore the possibility of a student transit pass program, providing free and unlimited transit to HRM youth, similar to the Kingston, Ontario program model.

The potential opportunity to work closely with the two school boards (HRCE and CSAP) to explore options for this type of program is supported by direction provided by the *Integrated Mobility Plan* which calls for building sustainable commuting habits in youth. Based on the success of the program in Kingston, Ontario, a similar program in Halifax could contribute to meeting this IMP goal.

There are, however, several points to be carefully considered before a particular approach is recommended:

- **Cost:** the potential cost of the program could be substantial. In Kingston, this cost is primarily borne by the school board. Further discussion is required to determine if this is possible in Halifax, or if a partnership opportunity exists.
- **Implementation:** The logistics of the program implementation is considerable. It is likely that if a partnership is established, staff would likely recommend a pilot program of one grade level, perhaps at one or two schools which are well served by transit. This pilot would be critical to working through implementation challenges and ensuring a smooth roll out of the overall program.

At this time, the User Fee By-law amendments recommended include provisions to allow for a pilot with high school students to proceed. Over the next year, staff will meet with HRCE and the Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial (CSAP) school officials to discuss the potential partnership opportunities, program details, timelines, logistics, marketing and costs. Prior to implementing a pilot project, a detailed programming strategy, including costs and timelines, will be brought before Council for consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The planned cash fare increase of 25 cents for conventional transit and the other strategic fare changes, e.g. reduction in the relative cost of the monthly passes and increase in the relative cost of paper tickets, are expected to increase fare revenue by approximately 4.5% or \$1,550,000 dollars per year. For 2019/20 the impact should be approximately half the annual amount or \$775,000. This number is difficult to estimate accurately, since riders will change their cash/ticket/pass purchasing behavior. Anticipated changes to ridership levels and the resulting revenue impacts has been factored into the estimate. In the approved 2019/20 Halifax Transit operating budget, \$812,000 was included for additional fare revenue from the approved fare and pass increases commencing mid fiscal year.

The revenue impact of Alternative 1 is approximately the same as for the proposal. The elimination of the senior fare and the increase in age of children travelling free (up to 12 years) each has a financial impact of approximately \$600,000 per year, in opposing directions.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are not significant risks associated with the recommendations of this report. The risks considered rate low.

Every fare increase comes with the risk that ridership will be negatively impacted; however, new programs have been developed over that past several years to protect the most vulnerable users of Halifax Transit. Currently, 900 participants in the Low-Income Transit Pass program receive monthly transit passes at 50% and nearly 10,000 individuals in the Halifax region are now receiving monthly transit passes through the provincial department of Community Services.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The November edition of Halifax Transit's Talk Transit survey focused on fares.

Highlights of the survey include:

- Overall, people are satisfied with Halifax Transit's current fare structure
- Respondents believe monthly passes should be priced in a way that makes more sense relative to tickets
- Many passengers would prefer to pay transit fare with smartphones/smart card technology

Participants were asked for their thoughts on the cost of monthly passes. The followings responses were noted:

- Monthly passes should be the price of traveling 15 days a month (30 trips) 39%
- Monthly passes should be the price of traveling 18 days a month (36 trips) 27%
- Monthly passes are appropriately priced relative to tickets 29%
- Other 5%

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There were no environmental implications identified associated with this report.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Council may choose to keep the Senior fare category and the age limit at which children travel for free as status quo.

As mentioned in the financial implications section of this report, the revenue impact of keeping the Senior fare category and the age limit at which children travel for free as status quo is comparable to the revenue impact of the recommendations.

The positive impact to our revenue if we remove the senior fare category is approximately \$600,000. The negative impact to our revenue if we run a pilot to increase the age at which children ride free is approximately \$600,000. Therefore, by doing both, the only real impact to revenue/budget is the overall effect of the fare increase (\$755,000 this year, 1,550,000 per year going forward). By doing neither, the only real impact to revenue/budget is the overall effect of the fare increase (\$755,000 this year, 1,550,000 per year going forward).

2. Council may choose to make amendments in addition to the amendments identified by staff. Based on the nature of any amendments, a supplementary report may be required.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Fare Tables – 2019 Transit Fare Strategy By-Law U-100 Amendments

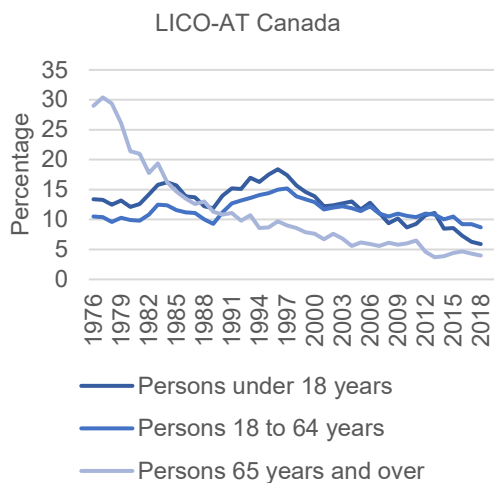
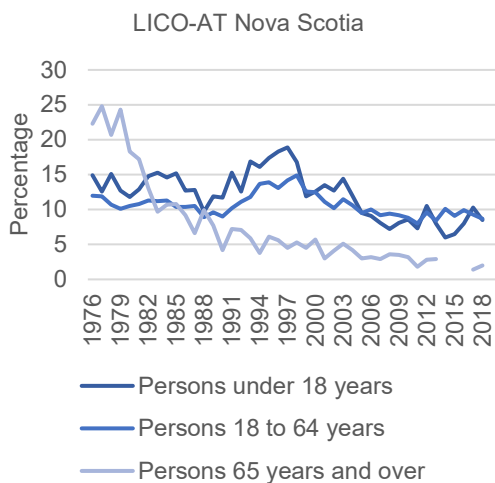
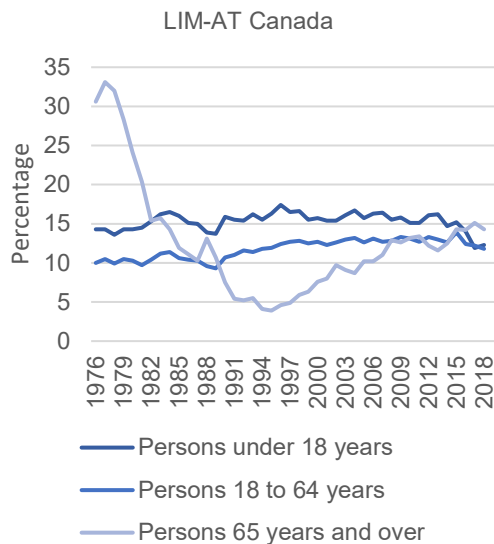
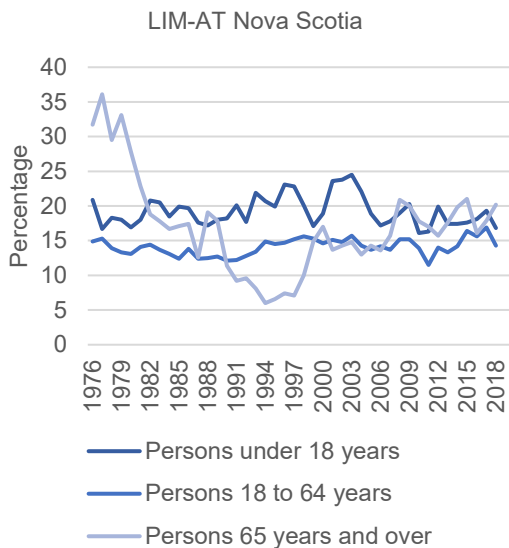
Attachment B - Showing proposed changes to By-law U-100

Attachment C - By-law U-105

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Marc Santilli, Manager Technical Services, Halifax Transit, 902.490.6649

Attachment B - Historical Trends of Low Income Measures¹



¹ Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0135-01 Low income statistics by age, sex and economic family type.



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

REVISED
July 31, 2024

Attachments A & B as per
Regional Council motion of
July 9, 2024

Item No. 15.1.3
Halifax Regional Council
July 9, 2024
August 6, 2024

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council
FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer
DATE: May 23, 2024
SUBJECT: Halifax Transit Fare Update 2024

ORIGIN

April 23, 2024, Regional Council motion (Item 18.1.1)

MOVED by Councillor Russell, seconded by Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon

THAT Halifax Regional Council:

1. Adopt the Resolution for Approval of Operating Budgets, Capital Plan and Tax Rates for Fiscal 2024/25 as set out in Schedule 1 of the staff report dated April 19, 2024...

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines recommended amendments to By-law U-100, the *User Charges By-law*, to reflect fare increases inline with Regional Council approval of the 2024/25 budget.

In addition, the following recommendations are proposed for consideration:

- Removal of the 2,000 participant limit for the Affordable Access Transit Pass Program to meet the growing needs of the program;
- Addition of new Regional Express fare products to offer increased options and improved convenience for Regional Express passengers;
- Proposed user charge increases and effective dates related to Halifax Transit programs; and
- Additional housekeeping amendments to ensure consistent product naming conventions.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Adopt By-law U-118, amending By-law U-100, the *User Charges By-law*, as set out in Attachment B to this report; and

Recommendation continued on page 2

2. Approve the removal of the 2,000 participant limit on the number of participants eligible for the Affordable Access Transit Pass Program to allow for an unlimited number of Affordable Access Transit Passes, subject to yearly budget availability and approval.

BACKGROUND

At the February 28, 2024 Budget Committee meeting, Halifax Transit presented the Halifax Transit 2024/25 Budget and Business Plan. Revenue changes laid out in the 2024/25 operating budget included a revenue increase, based on a 25-cent increase to the adult single ticket fare, with an average applied across other fare products. Fare increases will take effect September 1, 2024. The recommended By-Law U-100 amendments outlined in this report are required to execute Council’s direction from the budget process.

DISCUSSION

Amendments to Existing By-Law U-100 User Charges

Table 1 below provides an overview of recommended amendments to By-Law U-100 for existing fare products. Amendments to fares have been calculated based on an increase of 8.3%-12.5% across all fare products. These rates were applied to be as consistent as possible, while allowing for round numbers to streamline operations.

Table 1: Amendments to Existing User Charges

CONVENTIONAL BUS, FERRY, ACCESS-A-BUS				
	Current	New	Change	% Increase
Adult 1 Ticket/Ride	\$2.75	\$3.00	\$0.25	9.1%
Senior or Youth 1 Ticket/Ride	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$0.25	12.5%
Adult 10 Tickets/Rides	\$24.75	\$27.00	\$2.25	9.1%
Senior or Youth 10 Tickets/Rides	\$18.00	\$20.25	\$2.25	12.5%
Adult 10 Tickets/Rides Non-Profit or Charity	\$12.38	\$13.50	\$1.12	9.0%
Senior or Youth 10 Tickets/Rides Non-Profit or Charity	\$9.00	\$10.00	\$1.00	11.1%
Adult 20 Rides	\$44.00	\$48.00	\$4.00	9.1%
Senior or Youth 20 Rides	\$32.00	\$36.00	\$4.00	12.5%
Adult 1 Day Pass	\$7.00	\$7.50	\$0.50	7.1%
Senior or Youth 1 Day Pass	\$5.00	\$5.50	\$0.50	10.0%
Adult 2 Day Pass	\$12.00	\$13.50	\$1.50	12.5%
Senior or Youth 2 Day Pass	\$9.00	\$10.00	\$1.00	11.1%
Adult 7 Day Pass	\$23.00	\$25.50	\$2.50	10.9%
Senior or Youth 7 Day Pass	\$17.00	\$19.00	\$2.00	11.8%
Adult Monthly Pass	\$82.50	\$90.00	\$7.50	9.1%
Adult Monthly Affordable Access Transit Pass	\$41.25	\$45.00	\$3.75	9.1%
Senior or Youth Monthly Pass	\$60.00	\$66.00	\$6.00	10.0%
HRCE Student Monthly Pass ¹	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$0.00	0.0%
REGIONAL EXPRESS				

¹ No amendment to the Student Transit Pass user charge is recommended until the long-term future of the Student Transit Pass Pilot Program is determined.

	Current	New	Change	% Increase
Adult 1 Ticket/Ride	\$4.25	\$4.75	\$0.50	11.8%
Senior or Youth 1 Ticket/Ride	\$3.00	\$3.25	\$0.25	8.3%
Adult Monthly Pass	\$127.50	\$139.00	\$11.50	9%
Adult Monthly Affordable Access Transit Pass	\$63.75	\$69.50	\$5.75	9%
Senior or Youth Monthly Pass	\$90.00	\$99.00	\$9.00	10.0%
Adult with: Ticket, Monthly Pass, UPass or Transfer	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$0.00	0%
Senior or Youth with: Ticket, Senior or Youth Monthly Pass, Student Monthly Pass, or Transfer	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$0.00	0%

Recommended New Regional Express Fare Products

Currently, Regional Express fares are restricted to cash fare, single ride on the HFXGO app, monthly pass, or regular single ride ticket with a cash top up. In partnership with the Halifax International Airport Authority, there is also a plan currently in place to begin selling single trip tickets for the same value as cash fare for travellers requiring ground transportation from the airport. It is recommended that new electronic Regional Express Fare products be implemented to offer increased options and improved convenience for Regional Express passengers, consistent with other conventional fare products currently offered on the HFXGO app.

On October 25, 2022, Regional Council approved new conventional electronic HFXGO transit passes including 20 Ride, 1 Day, 2 Day, and 7 Day passes. In addition, the pre-existing 10 Ticket fare product was also made available through the app as a 10 Ride Pass.

It is now recommended that By-Law U-100 be amended to extend these new fare products to Regional Express service. These new fare products would initially be made available exclusively on HFXGO, with the potential of extending specific fare products, such as the 10 Ride Pass, to other formats such as paper tickets in the future.

Recommended user charges for these new fare products, outlined in Table 2 below, are based on the proposed new increased fares for 1 Ride Regional Express fare products. The discount applied is based on the discount model used for existing related pass products.

Table 2: Recommended User Charges for New Electronic Regional Express Products

NEW REGIONAL EXPRESS FARE PRODUCTS				
Fare Product	Discount Model	Cost Per Ride	Discounted Cost/Ride	Proposed User Charge
Adult 10 Tickets/Rides	10% discount/ride based on Adult single ride fare	\$4.75	\$4.27	\$42.70
Senior or Youth 10 Tickets/Rides	10% discount/ride based on Senior/Youth single ride fare	\$3.25	\$2.92	\$29.00

Adult 20 Rides	20% discount/ride based on Adult single ride fare	\$4.75	\$3.80	\$76.00
Senior or Youth 20 Rides	20% discount/ride based on Senior/Youth single ride fare	\$3.25	\$2.60	\$52.00
Adult 1 Day Pass	10% discount/ride based on Adult single ride fare x 2.75 rides	\$4.75	\$4.27 x 2.75	\$11.75
Senior or Youth 1 Day Pass	10% discount/ride based on Senior/Youth single ride fare x 2.75 rides	\$3.25	\$2.92 x 2.75	\$8.00
Adult 2 Day Pass	10% discount/ride based on Adult single ride fare x 5 rides	\$4.75	\$4.27 x 5	\$21.35
Senior or Youth 2 Day Pass	10% discount/ride based on Senior/Youth single ride fare x 5 rides	\$3.25	\$2.92 x 5	\$14.60
Adult 7 Day Pass	15% discount/ride based on Adult single ride fare x 10 rides	\$4.75	\$4.00 x 10	\$40.00
Senior or Youth 7 Day Pass	15% discount/ride based on Senior/Youth single ride fare x 10 rides	\$3.25	\$2.75 x 10	\$27.50

Recommendations Related to Halifax Transit Fare Programs

Halifax Transit provides various fare programs that are structured around established guidelines, discount models, and contractual renewal schedules. The following outlines proposed amendments to By-Law U-100 user charges related to these programs, along with proposed timelines for implementing increases in accordance with the approved Halifax Transit 2024/25 Budget.

Affordable Access Transit Pass Program

It is recommended that By-Law U-100 be amended to remove the existing limit of 2,000 participants allocated for the Affordable Access Transit Pass Program.

Through this program, eligible residents can apply to receive a 50% discount on the regular price of a Halifax Transit adult monthly pass. The Affordable Access Transit Pass Program is just one facet of the municipality's broader Affordable Access Program, which also encompasses the Recreation Access Program and the Property Tax Exemption and Deferral Program.

Applications for the Affordable Access Transit Pass Program are processed on a first-come, first-served basis, starting in mid-May each year. Once the cap of 2,000 passes is reached, a waiting list is established

for subsequent applications. Inactive approved applicants are removed from the program if they haven't purchased a pass in six consecutive months, making room for those on the waiting list to qualify for discounted passes.

Currently, due to existing program administrative procedures and verification protocols, applicants who have been approved for the program are required to visit one of the two municipal Customer Service Centres on a monthly basis to purchase passes. To enhance accessibility and make it easier for approved customers to purchase their passes, the Affordable Access Transit Pass will be available for approved applicants to purchase via the HFXGO app in mid-summer 2024.

The program has historically operated effectively within the 2,000 applicant threshold; however, due to increased demand, the program has outgrown this cap and the application limit was unintentionally exceeded by 148 applicants in 2023.

It is recommended that the 2,000 limit for the Affordable Access Transit Pass Program be removed. This measure would make the program more equitable and accessible while alleviating administrative pressures of managing the program cap and waiting list. Furthermore, the removal of the cap is aligned with the Recreation Access Program which currently has no limit on approved applicants.

Department of Community Services Pass Program

Employment Support & Income Assistance clients and their families residing in the Halifax Regional Municipality qualify for an annual Halifax Transit pass provided by the Department of Community Services Transit Pass Program (DCS Program). The current user charge for this program is \$25 per month and is paid through an agreement with the Department of Community Services, which was recently renewed in May 2024 and is valid until June 30, 2025.

It is recommended that the user charge for the program, outlined in By-Law U-100, be amended to \$27.50, reflecting a 10% increase in line with the fare adjustments approved in the 2024/25 budget. The current agreement establishes user charges as set out in By-Law U-100, and the Department of Community Services has been informed of the proposed user charge increase to be implemented starting July 1, 2025.

UPass Program

The September 2024 fare increases will not impact UPass Program user charges. Agreements with all UPass partners remain intact, with fees in accordance with the UPass user charge table set out in By-Law U-100.

Housekeeping Amendments

Additional general housekeeping amendments to By-Law U-100 are proposed, which are included in Attachment B. These additional amendments focus primarily on aligning fare product names with those displayed on the HFXGO app to provide consistent naming conventions across all channels.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Fare Increase (Existing Fare Products)

Based on financial models presented during the 2024/25 Operating Budget, Halifax Transit would expect to see the annual fare revenue increase approximately \$1,200,000/year for a full fiscal year (pro-rated to \$700,000/year in the current fiscal year due to implementation in September 2024). These projected increases to fare revenue have been accommodated for in the 2024/25 Operating budget.

Removal of the limit on the Affordable Access Transit Pass Program

Minimal financial impact is anticipated as a result of the removal of the application limit for the Affordable Access Transit Pass Program. Introducing the pass on the HFXGO app may stimulate greater interest and participation in the program, and population growth may result in total participants continuing to increase over time; however, no large one-year increases are anticipated, allowing for planning and budgeting of any projected annual financial risks.

New Regional Express Electronic Fare Products

It is expected that the introduction of new Regional Express pass products, as detailed in this report, could enhance ridership and revenue by providing additional options for commuters.

Marketing and Communications

Requirements for marketing and communications related to these changes will be approximately \$40,000. This is currently available within the approved 2024/25 operating budget for Halifax Transit.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report. Risks considered rate low.

Although fare increases carry the potential for reduced ridership, Halifax Transit mitigates this impact by providing various discounted programs aimed at maintaining affordability.

As outlined in the Financial Implications section of this report, there is minimal risk associated with the removal of the program cap for the Affordable Access Transit Pass.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No directed community engagement was undertaken in the preparation of this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could choose to:

1. Refuse to adopt By-law U-118, amending Schedule 1 of By-law U-100; or
2. Adopt By-law U-118 subject to modifications. This may require a supplementary staff report.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, SNS 2008, c 39:

- 7A** The purposes of the Municipality are to
- (a) provide good government;

- (b) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality; and
 - (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.
- 34** (3) The Council shall provide direction on the administration, plans, policies and programs of the Municipality to the Chief Administrative Officer.
- 69** (1) The Municipality may provide a public transportation service by
- (a) the purchase of vehicles or vessels and operation of the service;
 - (b) providing financial assistance to a person who will undertake to provide the service; or
 - (c) a combination of these methods.
- 79A** (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if
- (a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;
 - (b) the expenditure is in respect of an emergency under the *Emergency Management Act*; or
 - (c) the expenditure is legally required to be paid.
- 102** Subject to the approval of the Board for those services that are subject to the Public Utilities Act, the Council may, by by-law, prescribe charges for the provision of services for persons who use or benefit from the service, on a basis to be set out in the by-law.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Showing Proposed Changes to By-law U-100

Attachment B – Amending By-law U-118

Report Prepared by: Cheryl Chappel, Manager, Programs & Engagement, Halifax Transit (902) 483-2023

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY BY-LAW NUMBER U-100
RESPECTING USER CHARGES**

BE IT ENACTED by the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality, under the authority of Sections 102 and 104 of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, 1989 R.S.N.S. c. 39, as amended, as follows:

Short Title

1. This By-law shall be known as By-law U-100, the *User Charges By-law*.

Interpretation

2. In this By-law,
 - (a) “CAO” means the Chief Administrative Officer of Halifax Regional Municipality;
 - (b) “Council” means the Council of the Municipality;
 - (c) “Municipality” means the Halifax Regional Municipality; and
 - (d) “user charge” includes a charge, fare, fee, or levy for the provision of a service to be paid by a person who uses or benefits from the service.

Application of the By-law

3. Council hereby establishes user charges to be paid by the person using the service in the amount as set out in each Schedule to this By-law.
4. Any Schedule to this By-law shall form part of this By-law.
5. The user charges as listed in the Schedules are subject to Federal and Provincial taxes where applicable.

Offences

6. A person who contravenes any provision of this By-law shall be guilty of an offence.
7. A person who contravenes any provision of this By-law is liable on summary conviction to a penalty of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100) and not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000), in default of payment, to imprisonment for not more than ten days.

Done and passed in Council this 21st day of June, 2016.

Mayor

Municipal Clerk

I, Kevin Arjoon, Municipal Clerk of the Halifax Regional Municipality, hereby certify that the above-noted By-law was passed at a meeting of the Halifax Regional Council held on June 21, 2016.

Kevin Arjoon, Municipal Clerk

Notice of Motion: May 24, 2016
First Reading: May 31, 2016
Notice of Public Hearing Publication: June 4, 2016
Second Reading: June 21, 2016
Approval by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations: N/A
Effective Date: June 25, 2016

Amendment # 1 – Repeal and Replace Schedule 2

Notice of Motion: March 28, 2017
First Reading: April 11, 2017
Notice of Public Hearing Publication: April 22, 2017
Second Reading: May 9, 2017
Approval by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations: N/A
Effective Date: May 13, 2017

Amendment # 2

Notice of Motion: June 20, 2017
First Reading: July 18, 2017
Notice of Public Hearing Publication: July 29, 2017
Second Reading: August 15, 2017
Approval by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations: N/A
Effective Date: August 26, 2017

Amendment # 3 – “Welcomed in Halifax” Program Criteria

Notice of Motion: February 27, 2018
First Reading: March 6, 2018
Notice of Second Reading Publication: March 10, 2018
Second Reading: March 27th, 2018
Approval of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations: N/A
Effective Date: April 21, 2018

Amendment # 4 – Department of Community Services Transit Pass Program

Notice of Motion: May 8, 2018
First Reading: May 22, 2018
Notice of Second Reading Publication: May 26, 2018
Second Reading: June 19, 2018
Approval of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations: N/A
Effective Date: June 23, 2018

Amendment # 5 – Halifax Transit Fare Strategy 2019

Notice of Motion: July 30, 2019
First Reading: August 13, 2019
Notice of Second Reading Publication: August 24, 2019
Second Reading: September 17, 2019

Approval by Minister of Municipal Affairs: N/A
Effective Date: September 21, 2019

Amendment #6 – Child Transit Fares (By-law U-107)
Notice of Motion: December 1, 2020
First Reading: December 15, 2020
Notice of Second Reading Publication: December 19, 2020
Second Reading: January 12, 2021
Approval by Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: N/A
Effective Date: January 16, 2021

Amendment #7 – Student Transit Pass Pilot Program (By-law U-108)
Notice of Motion: April 6, 2021
First Reading: April 20, 2021
Notice of Second Reading Publication: April 24, 2021
Second Reading: May 18, 2021
Approval of Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: N/A
Effective Date: May 22, 2021

Amendment #8 – Schedule 5 - Pre-Planning Application (By-law U-111)
Notice of Motion: September 28, 2021
First Reading: October 5, 2021
Notices of Public Hearing Publications: October 9 and 16, 2021
Public Hearing: October 26, 2021
Approval by Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: N/A
Effective Date: November 27, 2021

Amendment #9 – Discounted Bulk Transit Fares (By-law U-110)
Notice of Motion: November 9, 2021
First Reading: November 23, 2021
Notice of Second Reading Publication: November 27, 2021
Second Reading: December 14, 2021
Approval by Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: N/A
Effective Date: December 18, 2021

Amendment #10 – Recreation User Charges – Schedules 3 and 4 (By-law U-106)
Notice of Motion: June 29, 2021
First Reading: July 20, 2021
Notice of Second Reading Publication: July 24, 2021
Second Reading: August 17, 2021
Approval by Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: N/A
Effective Date: April 1, 2022

Amendment #11 – Transit Electronic Fare Options – Schedule 1, s. 9 (By-law U-112)
Notice of Motion: October 18, 2022
First Reading: October 25, 2022
Notice of Second Reading Publication: November 5, 2022
Second Reading: November 22, 2022
Approval by Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: N/A

Effective Date: December 3, 2022

Amendment #12 – Schedule 6 - Property Information Inquiry User Charges (By-law U-109)

Notice of Motion: April 5, 2022
First Reading: April 12, 2022
Notice of Second Reading Publication: June 11, 2022
Second Reading: June 28, 2022
Approval of Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: N/A
Effective Date: January 30, 2023

Amendment #13 – Schedule 5 – Amending section 1, added section 2 (By-law U-115)

Notice of Motion: April 4, 2023
First Reading: April 25, 2023
Notice of Second Reading Publication: May 6, 2023
Second Reading: May 23, 2023
Approval of Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: N/A
Effective Date: June 1, 2023

Amendment #14 – Schedule 7 – Electric Vehicle Charges (By-law U-113)

Notice of Motion: April 25, 2023
First Reading: May 9, 2023
Notice of Second Reading Publication: May 13, 2023
Second Reading: June 6, 2023
Approval of Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: N/A
Effective Date: June 10, 2023

Amendment #15 – Schedule 1 (U-114)
Amending section 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 8A, 9, Adding section 4B, 8E, repealing and replacing section 9 U-Pass table

Notice of Motion: May 23, 2023
First Reading: June 6, 2023
Notice of Second Reading Publication: June 24, 2023
Second Reading: July 11, 2023
Approval of Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing: N/A
Effective Date: July 15, 2023

Schedule 1

Halifax Transit User Charges

Interpretation

1. In this Schedule,

(a) “Access-A-Bus” means the Halifax Transit service for persons unable to use conventional transit due to a physical or cognitive disability;

(aa) “Affordable Access Transit Pass” means a transit pass issued under the Affordable Access Transit Pass Program;

(b) “adult” means a person 18 years of age and up to and including 64 years of age;

(ba) “charity” means a registered Canadian charitable organization;

(c) “child” means a person between 0 years of age and up to and including 12 years of age;

(d) “CNIB” means The Canadian National Institute for the Blind;

(da) “Department of Community Services Pass” means a transit pass purchased by the Province of Nova Scotia and issued to an Employment Support and Income Assistance client;

(db) “Executive Director” means the position determined by the CAO to be the head of a department of the Municipality, and who is accountable to the CAO under section 36 of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter;

(e) “Halifax Transit” means the transit facilities and services provided by the Municipality;

(f) Repealed

(fa) “non-profit” means,

(i) a society incorporated pursuant to the Societies Act, R.S.N.S 1989, c. 435, as amended;

(ii) a not-for-profit corporation incorporated pursuant to the Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, S.C 2009, c.23; or

(iii) a non-profit organization otherwise incorporated pursuant to an Act of the Nova Scotia Legislature;

(g) “personal care attendant” means a person issued a Personal Care Attendant Identification Card by Access-A-Bus;

(h) “proper authority” means any employee of Halifax Transit carrying an identification card issued by Halifax Transit;

(i) “refugee” means a person identified as a refugee pursuant to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*;

- (ia) “refugee claimant” means a person
- (i) who has been granted Protected Person status by the Immigration and Refugees Board of Canada,
 - (ii) who has been issued a Refugee Protection Claimant Document by the Government of Canada,
 - (iii) who has applied to the Government of Canada for a Pre-Removal Risk Assessment,
 - (iv) who cannot return to their home country because the Government of Canada has suspended or deferred removal to that country, or
 - (v) without temporary status, has applied to the Government of Canada to stay in Canada permanently on humanitarian and compassionate grounds;
- (j) “registered Access-A-Bus user” means a person eligible to travel on Access-A-Bus as determined through an application process;
- (k) “senior” means a person 65 years of age and over;
- (l) “SmartTrip EPass” means a transit pass issued under the SmartTrip Program;
- (m) “student monthly pass” means a monthly pass purchased and distributed by the Halifax Regional Centre for Education;
- (ma) “Student Transit Pass” means a transit pass issued under the Student Transit Pass Pilot Project;
- (n) “transfer” means proof of payment in a form prescribed by Halifax Transit that
- (i) is issued by Halifax Transit when the initial user charge is paid;
 - (ii) allows the person to continuously travel on more than one route, of the same or lesser user charge, without having to pay an additional user charge; and
 - (iii) expires ninety (90) minutes after the last timepoint on the originating route;
- (o) “UPass” means a transit pass issued to a student who attends a post-secondary institution that has signed a contract with the Municipality; and
- (p) “youth” means a person between 13 years of age and up to and including 17 years of age.

Application

2. (1) Subject to section 3, no person shall travel or attempt to travel on Halifax Transit without paying the appropriate user charge as set out in section 9 of this Schedule.

(2) Where the amount of the user charge for passage on Halifax Transit is disputed, the person disputing the amount shall pay the amount requested by a proper authority.

(3) A person who refuses to pay the user charge requested by a proper authority shall be refused passage on Halifax Transit.

(4) The non-profit or charity user charge for 10 Tickets/Rides set out in section 9 shall only apply to single purchases of fifty (50) tickets or rides or more when purchased by a non-profit or charity for the purposes of distributing free of charge.

(5) For greater certainty, nothing in this Schedule applies to chartered transit services by contract with the Municipality.

3. (1) Notwithstanding subsection 2(1), travel on Halifax Transit shall be free for the following:

(a) a child;

(aa) repealed;

(b) a senior between 10:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. and after 6:00 p.m. until end of service day on Tuesdays;

(c) a person with a CNIB identification card;

(d) an employee or retiree of Halifax Transit;

(e) a Halifax Regional Police officer in uniform;

(f) a personal care attendant when accompanying a registered Access-A-Bus user;

and

(g) on Remembrance Day, a person, and any accompanying family member, who is a veteran or current member of the armed forces and

(i) is in uniform, or

(ii) who presents an armed forces ID;

(h) repealed;

(i) a person using transit under the Student Transit Pass Pilot Program; and

(j) a parking compliance officer in uniform.

(2) For greater certainty, where a person travels free on Halifax Transit under clauses (a) through (g) in subsection (1), that person shall not be required to pay an additional charge to use the Regional Express Service.

4. (1) Council, by resolution, or the CAO, may waive, in whole or in part, any user charge under this Schedule:

(a) for the following days,

(i) Canada Day,

(ii) Natal Day, or

(iii) after 6 p.m. and until end of service on New Year's Eve;

(b) where, in the opinion of Council or the CAO, such a waiver would be beneficial to the Municipality;

(c) for up to one year for a refugee under the settlement support program or for a refugee claimant;

(d) for event volunteers and participants upon application by an event organizer; or

(e) for ticket holders for an event of no less than 100 participants where the Municipality and the event organizer have an agreement whereby the event organizer agrees to pay the Municipality no less than \$1.00 for every ticket sold to the event.

(2) The CAO may delegate the authority under subsection 1 of this section to the Executive Director of Halifax Transit.

4A. An agreement under this Schedule may be signed by the CAO or their designate on behalf of the Municipality.

4B. Notwithstanding section 2, where a charge has been waived under section 4, a person subject to such waiver shall not be required to pay an additional charge to travel on the Regional Express Service.

Affordable Access Transit Pass Program

5. A person who meets the eligibility requirements of the Affordable Access Transit Pass Program as adopted by Council, by resolution, may apply to the program.

6. Council may, by resolution, set the number of Affordable Access Transit Passes available under the program.

7. An Affordable Access Transit Pass shall be provided by the Municipality on a first come, first serve basis.

8. Meeting the eligibility requirements does not guarantee a person will receive an Affordable Access Transit Pass.

8A. (1) The Executive Director of Transit or the Director designate shall set the program year for the Affordable Access Transit Pass Program.

(2) If the number of qualified applicants to the Affordable Access Transit Pass Program exceeds the number of Affordable Access Transit Passes available in the program year, a waiting list shall be created and names added as they are approved.

(3) The Executive Director of Transit or the Director designate may remove a person from the Affordable Access Transit Pass Program if:

(a) the person has not purchased an Affordable Access Transit Pass for a period of six (6) consecutive months; and

(b) there is a waiting list.

(4) A person removed from the program in accordance with subsection 3, may apply to the program in the same program year and, if accepted into the program, the person shall be added to the waiting list.

Department of Community Services Pass

8B. The Province of Nova Scotia may purchase transit passes from Halifax Transit for distribution to Employment Support and Income Assistance clients.

8C. Repealed.

Student Transit Pass Pilot Program

8D. (1) A person who meets the eligibility requirements of the Student Transit Pass Pilot Program as adopted by Council, by resolution, may be placed in the program.

(2) Meeting the eligibility requirements does not guarantee a person will be placed in the Student Transit Pass Pilot Program.

(3) Subject to subsection (1), a person placed in the Student Transit Pass Pilot Program shall be provided a Student Transit Pass.

Housing and Homelessness

8E. (1) The Executive Director of Halifax Transit may provide fare products on a monthly basis for initiatives such Executive Director determines are related to housing or homelessness to a maximum monthly value equal to the user charge for one-hundred forty (140) Adult Monthly Passes.

(2) Council may, by resolution, increase or reduce the maximum monthly value under subsection (1).

(3) The passes or tickets shall not be provided to a for profit business or industry.

(4) A request for a Transit Pass or tickets does not guarantee a person will receive them.

(5) The Executive Director of Halifax Transit may, with the consent of the CAO, delegate, in whole or in part, the issuance of the Transit passes and tickets to one or more employees of the Municipality.

User Charges for Halifax Transit

9. The user charges for Halifax Transit shall be as follows:

CONVENTIONAL BUS, FERRY AND ACCESS-A-BUS	
Category	User Charge per person
Adult Cash	\$2.75
Senior or Youth Cash	\$2.00
10 Tickets Adult	\$24.75
10 Tickets Senior or Youth	\$18.00
10 Ticket Non-Profit or Charity (Adult)	\$12.38
10 Ticket Non-Profit or Charity (Senior or Youth)	\$9.00
Adult Monthly Pass	\$82.50
Adult Monthly Affordable Access Transit Pass	\$41.25
Senior or Youth Monthly Pass	\$60.00
Student Monthly Pass	\$50.00
Electronic Adult Day Pass	\$7.00
Electronic Senior or Youth Day Pass	\$5.00
Electronic Adult Two-Day Pass	\$12.00
Electronic Senior or Youth Two-Day Pass	\$9.00
Electronic Adult Weekly Pass (7-day)	\$23.00
Electronic Senior or Youth Weekly Pass (7-day)	\$17.00
Electronic Adult 20-Ride Pass	\$44.00
Electronic Senior or Youth 20-Ride Pass	\$32.00

CONVENTIONAL BUS, FERRY AND ACCESS-A-BUS

Category	User Charge per person
Adult 1 Ticket/Ride	\$3.00
Senior or Youth 1 Ticket/Ride	\$2.25
Adult 10 Tickets/Rides	\$27.00
Senior or Youth 10 Tickets/Rides	\$20.25
Adult 10 Tickets/Rides Non-Profit or Charity	\$13.50
Senior or Youth 10 Tickets/Rides Non-Profit or Charity	\$10.00
Adult 20 Rides	\$48.00
Senior or Youth 20 Rides	\$36.00
Adult 1 Day Pass	\$7.50
Senior or Youth 1 Day Pass	\$5.50
Adult 2 Day Pass	\$13.50
Senior or Youth 2 Day Pass	\$10.00
Adult 7 Day Pass	\$25.50
Senior or Youth 7 Day Pass	\$19.00
Adult Monthly Pass	\$90.00
Adult Monthly Affordable Access Transit Pass	\$45.00
Senior or Youth Monthly Pass	\$66.00
Student Monthly Pass	\$50.00

UPASS				
Category	User charge per student			
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Fall term (September to December)	\$82.95	\$84.19	\$85.45	\$86.75
Winter term (January to April)	\$82.95	\$84.19	\$85.45	\$86.75
Extended term (September to May)	\$185.44	\$188.22	\$191.00	\$193.90
Summer term (May to August)	\$82.95	\$84.19	\$85.45	\$86.75

REGIONAL EXPRESS	
Category	User Charge per person
Adult Cash	\$4.25
Senior or Youth Cash	\$3.00
Adult Monthly Pass	\$127.50
Adult Monthly Affordable Access Transit Pass	\$63.75
Senior or Youth Monthly Pass	\$90.00
Adult with: Ticket, Monthly Pass, UPass or transfer	\$1.50
Senior or Youth with: Ticket, Youth or Senior Monthly Pass, Student Monthly Pass, Student Transit Pass, or transfer	\$1.00

REGIONAL EXPRESS	
Category	User Charge per person
Adult 1 Ticket/Ride	\$4.75
Senior or Youth 1 Ticket/Ride	\$3.25
Adult 10 Tickets/Rides	\$42.70
Senior or Youth 10 Tickets/Rides	\$29.00
Adult 20 Rides	\$76.00

Senior or Youth 20 Rides	\$52.00
Adult 1 Day Pass	\$11.75
Senior or Youth 1 Day Pass	\$8.00
Adult 2 Day Pass	\$21.35
Senior or Youth 2 Day Pass	\$14.60
Adult 7 Day Pass	\$40.00
Senior or Youth 7 Day Pass	\$27.50
Adult Monthly Pass	\$139.00
Adult Monthly Affordable Access Transit Pass	\$69.50
Senior or Youth Monthly Pass	\$99.00
Adult with: Ticket, Monthly Pass, UPass or transfer	\$1.50
Senior or Youth with: Ticket, Youth or Senior Monthly Pass, Student Monthly Pass, or transfer	\$1.00

UPASS				
Category	User charge per student			
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Fall term (September to December)	\$84.19	\$85.45	\$86.75	\$88.05
Winter term (January to April)	\$84.19	\$85.45	\$86.75	\$88.05
Extended term (September to May)	\$188.22	\$191.00	\$193.90	\$196.80
Summer term (May to August)	\$84.19	\$85.45	\$86.75	\$88.05

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES PASS	
Category	User Charge per person
Department of Community Services Monthly Pass	\$25.00

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES PASS	
Category	User Charge per person
Department of Community Services Monthly Pass	\$27.50

SMARTTRIP EPASS	
Category	User Charge per person
EPass for Adult	87.5% of the cost of 12 adult monthly passes

Schedule 2

SmartTrip Program Membership Fees

1. The user charges for enrolment in the SmartTrip Program shall be as follows:

Workplace Size (# of Employees)	Annual Fee
1-100	\$100
100+	\$250

*** REVISED July 31, 2024 – as per Regional Council motion of July 9, 2024 ***

**Attachment B
(Amending By-law)**

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY BY-LAW NUMBER U-118
RESPECTING USER CHARGES**

BE IT ENACTED by the Council of the Municipality that Schedule 1 of By-law U-100, the *User Charges By-law*, shall be amended as follows:

1. Amending subsection 2(4) by adding in the backlash and word “/Rides” after the word “Tickets” and before the word “set.
2. Amending clause 3(1)(f) by striking out the word “and” after the semi-colon.
3. Repealing the table entitled “CONVENTIONAL BUS, FERRY AND ACCESS-A-BUS” in section 9 and replacing it with the following:

CONVENTIONAL BUS, FERRY AND ACCESS-A-BUS	
Category	User Charge per person
Adult 1 Ticket/Ride	\$3.00
Senior or Youth 1 Ticket/Ride	\$2.25
Adult 10 Tickets/Rides	\$27.00
Senior or Youth 10 Tickets/Rides	\$20.25
Adult 10 Tickets/Rides Non-Profit or Charity	\$13.50
Senior or Youth 10 Tickets/Rides Non-Profit or Charity	\$10.00
Adult 20 Rides	\$48.00
Senior or Youth 20 Rides	\$36.00
Adult 1 Day Pass	\$7.50
Senior or Youth 1 Day Pass	\$5.50
Adult 2 Day Pass	\$13.50
Senior or Youth 2 Day Pass	\$10.00

Adult 7 Day Pass	\$25.50
Senior or Youth 7 Day Pass	\$19.00
Adult Monthly Pass	\$90.00
Adult Monthly Affordable Access Transit Pass	\$45.00
Senior or Youth Monthly Pass	\$66.00
Student Monthly Pass	\$50.00

4. Repealing the table entitled "UPASS" in section 9.
5. Repealing the table entitled "REGIONAL EXPRESS" in section 9 and replacing it as follows:

REGIONAL EXPRESS	
Category	User Charge per person
Adult 1 Ticket/Ride	\$4.75
Senior or Youth 1 Ticket/Ride	\$3.25
Adult 10 Tickets/Rides	\$42.70
Senior or Youth 10 Tickets/Rides	\$29.00
Adult 20 Rides	\$76.00
Senior or Youth 20 Rides	\$52.00
Adult 1 Day Pass	\$11.75
Senior or Youth 1 Day Pass	\$8.00
Adult 2 Day Pass	\$21.35
Senior or Youth 2 Day Pass	\$14.60
Adult 7 Day Pass	\$40.00
Senior or Youth 7 Day Pass	\$27.50

Adult Monthly Pass	\$139.00
Adult Monthly Affordable Access Transit Pass	\$69.50
Senior or Youth Monthly Pass	\$99.00
Adult with: Ticket, Monthly Pass, UPass or transfer	\$1.50
Senior or Youth with: Ticket, Youth or Senior Monthly Pass, Student Monthly Pass, or transfer	\$1.00

6. Adding the following table immediately after the newly added table entitled "REGIONAL EXPRESS" in section 9:

UPASS				
Category	User charge per student			
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Fall term (September to December)	\$84.19	\$85.45	\$86.75	\$88.05
Winter term (January to April)	\$84.19	\$85.45	\$86.75	\$88.05
Extended term (September to May)	\$188.22	\$191.00	\$193.90	\$196.80
Summer term (May to August)	\$84.19	\$85.45	\$86.75	\$88.05

7. Repealing the table entitled "DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES PASS" in section 9 and replacing it with the following table:

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES PASS	
Category	User Charge per person
Department of Community Services Monthly Pass	\$27.50

8. Section 7 of this amending by-law shall be effective on and after July 1, 2025. The remaining sections shall be effective on and after September 1, 2024.

Done and passed this day of , 2024.

MUNICIPAL CLERK

MAYOR

I, Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk of the Halifax Regional Municipality, hereby certify that the above-noted By-law was passed at a meeting of Halifax Regional Council held on , 2024.

Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk