

Anti-Racism Review of Low Income Fare Programs - Engagement Recommendations and Action Items

LAP: Leisure Access Program

DAR: Donate A Ride Program

PATH: Providing Accessible Transit Here

2018-2020 Past Program Reviews Recommendations	2021-2022 Anti-Racism Engagement Recommendations	Progress To Date	In Progress/Future Action Items
Application Process			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ride Transit - Application Readability: Review and update the Ride Transit & LAP application form for readability, length and ease of use. → Ride Transit - Translate Application: Translate application form and program material into the most common languages in Edmonton. → Ride Transit - Online Application: Have the application form available online as a fillable form that can be submitted electronically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ride Transit - Application Readability: Simplify application form and use the GBA+ lens on the application process. → Ride Transit - Translate Application: Translate application form and program material. → Ride Transit - Application Submission: Explore easier access for people/agencies to hand in the forms besides mailing it in or going downtown. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ride Transit - Application Requirements and Readability: In 2020, the Ride Transit & LAP application requirements for address and spousal verification changed to address and spousal declaration - this means that applicants are no longer required to provide proof of address or marriage documents such as bills, invoices, etc. → Some application components were simplified from written explanations to check boxes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ride Transit/ LAP - Online Application: In addition to paper copies of the application, an online application will launch by the end of Q1 2023. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant documents can be scanned and uploaded. • Allows applicants to save information for up to 90 days. • Provides an opportunity to speed up the time to approval by streamlining the review process. → Ride Transit - Application Readability: The Ride Transit & LAP application form will be simplified and updated in Q1 2023. → Ride Transit - Translate Application: A built-in translator with online Ride Transit application is currently being explored with the application software vendor.

2018-2021 Engagement Recommendations	2021-2022 Anti-Racism Engagement Recommendations	Progress To Date	In Progress/Future Action Items
Program Eligibility			
<p>→ Ride Transit/LAP - LICO Criteria: Make the income eligibility criteria for Ride Transit the same as the requirements for LAP to address the relationship and shared processes between the programs.</p> <p>→ Ride Transit - Eligibility Qualifiers: Consider alternative eligibility qualifiers for applicants that do not have a Notice of Assessment.</p> <p>→ Expand DAR & PATH Agencies: Find avenues beyond social agencies that people could use to get access to the programs.</p> <p>→ Ride Transit - Agency Letter: Allow agencies to provide a letter of support explaining an applicant’s situation.</p>	<p>→ Ride Transit - Eligibility for Certain Circumstances: Review eligibility for families/individuals in transition (e.g. family break-up, from houseless to housing, youth turning 18).</p> <p>→ Ride Transit - Agency Letter: Create a “last resort” option for agencies to support users to access the program without documentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide agencies with a template letter where agencies could explain refugee status, etc. 	<p>→ Ride Transit - Eligibility Qualifiers: Additional program qualifiers have been added to the Ride Transit & LAP eligibility criteria in addition to LICO and AISH. The new qualifiers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CPP-Disability Benefit; Government of Alberta Income Support; Learner Income Support; New Permanent Resident; Refugee Status; Child under government care; and Employment Insurance</i> <p>→ In 2018, a sliding scale model was implemented for Ride Transit to align with LAP, adding program access for those up to 10% above LICO and introducing a second tier to the program that offered a \$50 transit pass to those with incomes 10%-25% above LICO.</p>	<p>→ Ride Transit - Agency Letter: Conditional eligibility for Ride Transit passes will be offered to applicants that meet minimum requirements or present an agency letter that explains their circumstances. This is to support newcomers and families in transition (e.g. youth turning 18) with limited access to documentation.</p> <p>→ Expand DAR & PATH Agencies: While the number and type of organizations participating in DAR and PATH have expanded over the years, participation in the programs is voluntary. The City will be promoting DAR and PATH in 2023, which should help expand the programs to more diverse types of organizations.</p>
Program Requirements			
	<p>→ DAR & PATH Agency Reporting: Simplify agency reporting forms and process for DAR and PATH programs.</p>		<p>→ DAR & PATH- Agency Reporting: The DAR and PATH reporting forms will be simplified and updated in Q1 2023.</p>

2018-2021 Engagement Recommendations	2021-2022 Anti-Racism Engagement Recommendations	Progress To Date	In Progress/Future Action Items
Support for Applicants			
<p>→ Ride Transit - Application Support: Provide application support at Edmonton Service Centre</p>		<p>→ Ride Transit Program Contact: Ride Transit members calling 311 with inquiries about the program are directed to the ETS Customer Programs team which provides ongoing support to members.</p>	<p>→ Ride Transit - Application Support: Quick review of Ride Transit applications at Edmonton Service Centre is being explored to offer conditional eligibility for Ride Transit to pre-qualified applicants for immediate access to transit.</p>
Fare Distribution			
<p>→ Ride Transit - Pass Pick-Up Locations: Review feasibility of current pick up locations and consider additional locations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore partnerships with other groups or levels of government for program promotion, administration, and distribution. 	<p>→ DAR - Fare Product Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Daily Pass within the DAR program so clients go to multiple services or places throughout the day. • Allow DAR agencies to receive free monthly passes in addition to tickets. <p>→ DAR - Ticket Expiration: Review DAR ticket expiration dates; explore a process to redistribute or extend the date for year-end leftover tickets.</p>	<p>→ Ride Transit - Pass Pick-Up Locations: In 2020, the City introduced online sales website and phone sales for Ride Transit passes. Members can purchase passes through these channels and have them mailed to their address.</p> <p>→ The auto-debit payment option was expanded to include Ride Transit participants who are not exclusively AISH recipients to make it easier for participants to ensure they purchase their pass on-time for each month.</p>	<p>→ Ride Transit - Pass Pick-Up Locations: Phase 3 of Arc implementation, the electronic fare payment system, includes Ride Transit. This will eliminate the need for Ride Transit riders to pick up paper passes each month.</p> <p>→ DAR - Fare Product Options: Starting 2023, DAR will offer both single tickets and day passes. Monthly passes will be considered at a later stage, to reflect options available within Arc.</p>

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Program Funding			
<p>→ PATH & DAR- Product Allotment: Increase the number of DAR tickets and PATH passes available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor current resource allocations and program usage measures to inform future resource allocation decisions. 	<p>→ PATH & DAR- Product Allotment: Increase number of DAR tickets and PATH passes available.</p>	<p>→ PATH- Product Allotment: In October 2020, Administration increased the number of monthly PATH passes from 600 to 1,900 to align with Edmonton's houseless population estimates.</p>	<p>→ DAR & PATH- Product Allotment: The funding formula for both DAR and PATH is being reviewed to ensure strong alignment to social outcomes. Any planned update to the formula will be shared with Council.</p>
Marketing and Outreach			
<p>→ PATH/DAR/Ride Transit - Marketing: Advertise the programs in the community; expand number of agencies to include more ethno-cultural and immigrant-serving agencies.</p> <p>→ PATH/DAR/Ride Transit - Outreach: Use different communication channels to target different customer groups such as newcomers, youth not currently enrolled in school, and low-income residents who do not receive agency support.</p>	<p>→ PATH/DAR/Ride Transit - Marketing: Market the programs widely so all Indigenous and racialized clients can take part in the programs.</p> <p>→ PATH & DAR- Communications: Provide more clarity to agencies on eligibility for the different programs (particularly PATH).</p> <p>→ PATH/DAR/Ride Transit- Outreach: Partner with ethno-cultural organizations and create an outreach program for fare programs; offer a speaker from the City to inform agency staff.</p> <p>→ PATH & DAR- Agency List: Revisit list of agencies published on City websites as some clients may misunderstand what agencies can provide them.</p>	<p>→ Ride Transit- Outreach: The City has recently begun participating in outreach events for newcomers to promote Ride Transit and LAP. At the NorQuest College LINC (English Language Program) event in July 2022, over 100 Ride Transit/LAP applications were distributed to newcomers.</p>	<p>→ DAR/PATH/Ride Transit- Communications and Outreach: A new marketing campaign for all three low-income fare programs will launch in 2023. Websites of DAR and PATH will be updated in Q1 2023 to clarify program eligibility.</p> <p>→ PATH & DAR- Agency List: The City will begin asking agencies if they would like to be published as program partners on City websites in Q1 2023 to help create better awareness for program access with potential participants.</p>

Other Recommendations and Implementation Challenges

Recommendations	Implementation Challenges
Application Process	
<p>→ Ride Transit - Income Verification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore integrating income verification with other levels of government serving the same population. • Build in coordination with the Income Support office to make sure applicant information is still accurate to streamline the renewal process. 	<p>→ Ride Transit- Income Verification: Verifying the individual's income status with the provincial or federal government does not comply with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) as individuals have not consented to sharing their personal information between government bodies for the purpose of Ride Transit application income verification. Additionally, the City of Edmonton's data systems are not integrated with the provincial and federal government and therefore verifying income status through this method may delay the application processing period.</p>
Program Eligibility	
<p>→ Ride Transit - Eligibility: Explore adding WCB recipients to the list of possible criteria for Ride Transit eligibility.</p> <p>→ Ride Transit - LICO Criteria: Expand income eligibility criteria above LICO +25% to support individuals and families struggling with inflation.</p>	<p>→ Ride Transit - Eligibility: Ride Transit membership length is a minimum of one year and requires that the individual is eligible for Ride Transit for the duration of their membership. WCB participation periods vary based on individual circumstances which may make them ineligible for Ride Transit for a portion of their membership. Should the individual's duration on WCB extend and their annual household income is within the LICO criteria, they will be eligible to apply for Ride Transit with a Notice of Assessment.</p> <p>→ Ride Transit- LICO Criteria: LICO thresholds are set by the federal government and are updated annually to adjust for inflation. In Q1 2023, LICO thresholds are expected to increase, making more households eligible for Ride Transit in 2023.</p>
Program Requirements	
<p>→ PATH - Pass Return: Re-examine requirement of returning previous bus pass.</p>	<p>→ PATH- Pass Return: PATH was designed in collaboration with the partner agencies and is a relationship-based program. PATH agencies have indicated that they would like to maintain this requirement, as it supports positive relationships with participants, enables further connections with other support programs and encourages responsibility from the client.</p>

Recommendations	Implementation Challenges
Fare Distribution	
<p>→ Ride Transit - Pass Pick-Up Locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a connection with Alberta Works and Alberta Support Centres for program promotion and pass pick up. Utilize Edmonton Public Library as pick up locations. <p>→ PATH - Annual Pass: Create a PATH annual pass to reduce the monthly administrative burden on agencies.</p>	<p>→ Ride Transit - Pass Pick-Up Locations: While Edmonton Public Library initially piloted the Ride Transit program in 2017 at three locations, these pick-up locations were removed due to challenges with selling and reconciling passes at libraries. There may be challenges with adding provincial government locations as pick-up locations due to limited resources at these locations and transit pass sales not being within the scope of their operations.</p> <p>→ PATH - Annual Pass: Monthly passes provide more flexibility to agencies when there are changes in pass recipients. Additionally, an annual pass would be of higher value, increasing the risk of theft. ETS is also transitioning away from annual passes with the launch of Arc.</p>
Program Funding	
<p>→ PATH & DAR- Agency Resources: Compensate agency staff for their time to distribute passes and tickets to clients.</p> <p>→ PATH & DAR- Product Allotment: Provide an unlimited supply of tickets and passes for agencies to be given out at their discretion with different fare options (e.g. single ticket, weekly pass, etc.).</p>	<p>→ PATH & DAR- Agency Resources: Grants and funding to different social agencies are administered through the City's Family and Community Support Services Program (FCSS).</p> <p>→ PATH & DAR- Product Allotment: PATH and DAR operate on limited resources. The number of passes and tickets available through PATH and DAR is set by Council, through the approved funding formula.</p>