

## FARE POLICY AMENDMENT - CHILDREN UNDER 12

### RECOMMENDATION

That the October 13, 2023, City Operations report CO01580, be received for information.

<b>Requested Council Action</b>	Information Only		
<b>ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle</b>	<b>ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals</b>		
<b>CONNECTED</b> This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	<b>Urban Places</b>		
<b>City Plan Values</b>	ACCESS		
<b>City Plan Big City Move(s)</b>	Community of Communities	<b>Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities</b>	Mobility Network
<b>Corporate Business Plan</b>	Serving Edmontonians		
<b>Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Policy C451H - Edmonton Transit Service Fare Policy</li> </ul>		
<b>Related Council Discussions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CO01192, Ride Transit and Leisure Access Programs, Executive Committee, October 26, 2022</li> <li>CR_5608, Financial and Operating Implications to Increase the Age for Accompanied Children to Ride for Free - 12 and Under Ride Transit for Free, Community and Public Services Committee, March 14, 2018</li> </ul>		

### Previous Council/Committee Action

At the October 26, 2022 Executive Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration prepare amendments to City Policy C451H Transit Fare Service Policy that would include revisions to the transit user fee schedule that would allow youth riders 12 and under to ride for free without a fare paying adult for consideration during the 2023-2026 supplemental operating budget deliberations.

## **FARE POLICY AMENDMENT - CHILDREN UNDER 12**

### **Executive Summary**

- This report responds to a motion from Executive Committee to bring forward amendments to City Policy C451H - Transit Fare Policy to remove the requirement for children 12 and under to be accompanied by a fare paying person to ride fare-free.
- Administration has completed additional assessment of the financial implications of this policy change. Should Council decide to move ahead with this policy change, Council will first need to approve a service package for a revenue budget adjustment request of \$900,000 as part of the Fall 2023 Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment.

### **REPORT**

At the April 10, 2018, City Council meeting, Council approved expanding fare-free transit for children age five and under to age 12 and under, provided they travel with a fare-paying rider. This approach is reflected in the current Transit Fare Policy C451H (Attachment 1).

At the October 26, 2022, Executive Committee meeting, Administration presented report CO01192 Ride Transit and Leisure Access Programs, in response to a Council motion from the March 14/16/22, 2022, City Council meeting, which requested information on several items including analysis of opportunities to allow children 12 and under to travel on ETS fare-free without being accompanied by a fare-paying rider. Committee directed Administration to return with a revised fare policy for Council consideration, to remove the requirement to travel with a fare-paying rider. The draft revised fare policy is presented in Attachment 2.

### **Implementation**

Implementation of the policy change would need to come after Council approval of the required budget. In addition to adjusting all related signage, the City would also develop appropriate marketing and outreach programs to support the change. Communication and engagement with Transit Operators and Transit Peace Officers would also be critical to ensure they are supported through this change. The City would also provide relevant data to the school boards to assist them in their forecasting for the 2024-2025 school year.

If implemented, Arc cards would not be issued to children under 12 riding fare-free. This would reduce the risk of fraudulent use of free cards, which could occur if cards were shared with riders who are required to pay fares.

### **Budget/Financial Implications**

This change would be an enhanced level of service and will require a funding source to fund the revenue budget adjustment associated with the current policy.

Working with the school boards, ETS has developed an estimate of the direct revenue impact of monthly pass sales for students aged 12 and under during the 2022-2023 school year.

Approximately 1,250 youth passes are sold each month to the school boards for youth 12 and under. The lost revenue for the proposed policy change is estimated to be just over \$900,000.

## **FARE POLICY AMENDMENT - CHILDREN UNDER 12**

Other revenue impacts are difficult to estimate with existing data. Revenue would be lost from children who currently pay when riding alone, as well as from some fare-paying riders accompanying children. Given the impacts to their forecasting, the school boards will be a key stakeholder if this approach is advanced.

Based on the above assessment, a service package for a decrease in transit fare revenues (revenue budget adjustment) in the amount of \$900,000 would be brought back to Council in the Fall 2023 Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment for approval if this policy change is directed by Council.

### **Community Insight**

The development of C451H, Edmonton Transit Service Fare Policy included public input that was collected during the engagement for the Edmonton Transit Strategy, and subsequent focus groups and online surveys. The research and public input led to the Fare Policy's Principles, the revenue-cost ratio targets, and the structure of the concession rates for different user groups.

For this report, the City worked closely with Edmonton's two school boards to gain insight into the ridership of youth aged 12 and under. After the school boards identified birth dates and school locations with students' monthly ETS Pass purchases, ETS collaborated with partners to better understand the potential impacts of this policy change. Working with administrators responsible for student transportation, ETS assessed current travel patterns and the anticipated behaviour changes for this category.

### **GBA+**

According to Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, which provides population estimates by five-year age groups, youth ages 14 and under represented approximately 18 per cent of Edmonton's population as of July 1, 2021. In 2020, Statistics Canada data showed that one-in-six youth under the age of 18 in Edmonton live in low-income situations. Youth living in low-income households often rely on transit to access school and after-school activities. The 2015 Edmonton Household Travel Survey indicated that after car passenger travel and walking, transit represented the third highest mode share, accounting for seven per cent of overall trips made by youth ages 16 and under.

Edmonton Transit Service Fare Policy C451H supports a fair, equitable and affordable transit service that is needs-based. The current fare structure offers lower prices for fare products for youth, in recognition that youth are often more reliant on transit, and may be more challenged to pay for transit fares. In addition to fare structuring, ETS offers several low-income fare programs that are accessible to youth, such as Ride Transit. These programs are specifically targeted at transit riders based on need, in alignment with Council-approved fare policy.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Edmonton Transit Service Fare Policy C451H
2. Revised Draft Edmonton Transit Service Fare Policy C451I