



CITY OF ST. ALBERT ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

TITLE: Employee Bus Pass Trial

(C368-2016) Moved by Councillor Hughes

“That the City conduct a 6-month trial from August 2016 - January 2017 where City employees are offered complementary local bus passes or tickets to encourage the use of transit and to help address the downtown parking shortage issues and that Administration provide feedback to Council concerning the results of the trial and any suggestions for service improvements in Q1 of 2017.”

BACKGROUND:

Please refer to Attachment 1, Administrative Backgrounder from June 7, 2016.

Usage Results:

- In total five employees took advantage of the free local transit pass.
- One of the five employees stopped using the trial midway due to a leave of absence.
- Only one employee made regular use of the pass.
- Two of the five employees worked out of St. Albert Place (SAP), including the individual who went on leave.
- The other participants were from recreational facilities such as Servus Place and Fountain Park.

The five participants rode transit for a total of 120 one-way trips over the five months from August to December. For comparison, an average transit commuter would be expected to have 10 one-way trips a week x 4 weeks x 5 months = 200 one-way trips.

All users in the trial combined did not reach this expected average usage from one full time transit user.

Trips Taken (August 2016 – January 2017)	
Participant 1	1 (0.8% of total)
Participant 2	90 (75% of total)
Participant 3	9 (7.5% of total)
Participant 4	8 (6.7% of total)
Participant 5	12 (10% of total)
Total	120 trips

Overall Results:

	Work Trips		Personal Trips		Both		TOTAL
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	
August	9	9	3	5	3	5	34
September	13	9	2	3	4	3	34
October	11	3	4	3	1	0	22
November	10	6	5	0	5	0	26
December	1	0	1	2	0	0	4
January	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	44	27	15	13	13	8	120

One purpose of the trial was to encourage the use of Transit usage to help with availability of downtown parking, but only two of the participants in the trial worked at SAP (one of which stopped using the bus shortly after registering).

Due to the low usage, Administration did not extend the service beyond the trial period ending January 31, 2017. However, if Council wishes to revisit or modify the trial program they can direct Administration to continue with the program in some form.

Should Council have any questions or want additional information please contact Glenn Tompolski, General Manager, Infrastructure Services at 780-459-1738, or Kevin Bamber, Transit Director at 780-418-6061.

Report Date: February 27, 2017
Author(s): Kevin Bamber
Committee/Department: Transit
General Manager: Glenn Tompolski
City Manager: Kevin Scoble

Administrative Backgrounder
Council Motion – Complementary Employee Bus Pass Trial

On May 10, 2016 Councillor Hughes provided notice in accordance with Section 23 of Procedure Bylaw 35/2009 that she intended to bring forward the following motion:

In order for Council to debate the motion, the motion must be formally moved.

(Councillor Hughes)

That the City conduct a 6-month trial from June - November 2016 where City employees receive complementary local bus passes to encourage the use of transit and to help address the downtown parking shortage issues and that Administration provide feedback to Council concerning the results of the trial in Q4 of 2016.

BACKGROUND:

Currently there are four transit routes that serve St. Albert Place (SAP):

1. Commuter Route 202 provides all day service from St. Albert Centre and from Village Transit Station, but with fewer trips in the off-peak direction in the morning (from VTS to SACE).
2. A1 – Provides service to SAP from the neighbourhoods of Heritage Lakes, Grandin, and Mission after am peak.
3. A21 – Peak hour service to and from VTS along Grandin Road.
4. A14 – Main north-south spine route through St. Albert. Provides all day service from the two transit stations and from districts in Erin Ridge North, the hospital area, and along St. Albert Trail.

Travel to SAP from many neighbourhoods requires a transfer at either Village Transit Station or St. Albert Centre Exchange. If one resides within proximity to Route A14, A21, or 202 – Grandin Road area, St. Albert Trail, Hospital district, or Costco area – travel to St. Albert Place is quite direct and competitive with the automobile. For all other areas of St. Albert, regardless of quadrant, the trip can take up to 25 minutes. E.g., Northridge 23 minutes, Erin Ridge 23 minutes, Kingswood 23 minutes, Pineview 21 minutes. These areas require one transfer but the transfer is timely and short. This travel time does not include the walk and wait at the bus stop.

Based on Transit experience, it is likely the overall transit commute would exceed the tolerable limits of “extra time” as compared to auto travel. For example, if it takes 10 minutes to drive, and 23 minutes (plus walk and wait times) to take

transit, the permissible threshold is usually exceeded, and the individual will drive.

Summer months are a peak vacation time for employees so a pilot would not be indicative of demand. The timing of the pilot is recommended to be September through December. However, prior to implementing a pilot project, Administration would want to survey city staff and do some preliminary analysis on potential usage. Some questions which would be useful to have answers to are as follows:

- How many positions in SAP require vehicles for their everyday job?
- How many staff at SAP actually live in St. Albert?
- How many would take transit if it was offered?
- Does the City offer this free service to other downtown staff? (e.g.: Innovation and Technology Services and Human Resources).
- Does the City offer this free service to all staff regardless of location? (e.g.: PW, Servus, etc.).

StAT could develop a questionnaire / survey with the help of ITS, and complete the survey prior to implementation of a fall pilot. This alone might tell Administration if a pilot is required.

It should also be noted that a free transit pass could be considered a taxable benefit.

The following conditions would also have to apply if this proposal moved forward:

- That the program be limited to full time permanent employees who could display their City of St. Albert photo ID card in lieu of providing a fare when boarding a conventional transit bus. This program would not apply to Handibus.
- That the program would only apply to St. Albert Transit conventional transit service. City ID's would not be valid for fares on ETS or Strathcona Transit and no transfers would be provided as this would contravene out fare reciprocity agreements with our regional partners.

Report Date: May 10, 2016 Committee/Department: Infrastructure Services General Manager Review GT
--