
SUBJECT: CITY OF VICTORIA YOUTH BUS PASS PROGRAM UPDATE

PURPOSE

This report, providing an update on the City of Victoria’s youth bus pass program, is provided to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (the “Commission”) for **INFORMATION**.

BACKGROUND

At the meeting of November 5, 2019, the Commission approved the City of Victoria’s request for a pilot bus pass program for youth residing within the municipality. The program was developed using the principles of the Universal Pass (“U-PASS”) program in place at three post-secondary and two secondary schools in the Victoria Regional Transit System (“VRTS”), whereby a discounted monthly fee is assessed for all those within the eligibility criteria. The assessed fee represents a seventy-five percent discount on the value of a regular monthly pass and is only made available through the principle of universal enrolment and assessment. For the pilot program, the City of Victoria is assessed a fee of \$11.25 per month for 7,200 eligible youth residents. This pilot is approved to run until August 31, 2020.

DISCUSSION

The City of Victoria’s youth bus pass program was introduced for December 2019 and is administered using regular VRTS youth/senior monthly passes. Through the use of a discreet series of passes, BC Transit is able to collect usage data on the number of passes used on buses per month and the average number of trips per pass per month. The trends over full months for both of these measures are provided in the graphs below. It is important to note that the months inclusive of March to May are not shown given that fares were not collected during this period as a safety response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chart 1: Total City of Victoria youth bus passes used on transit by month

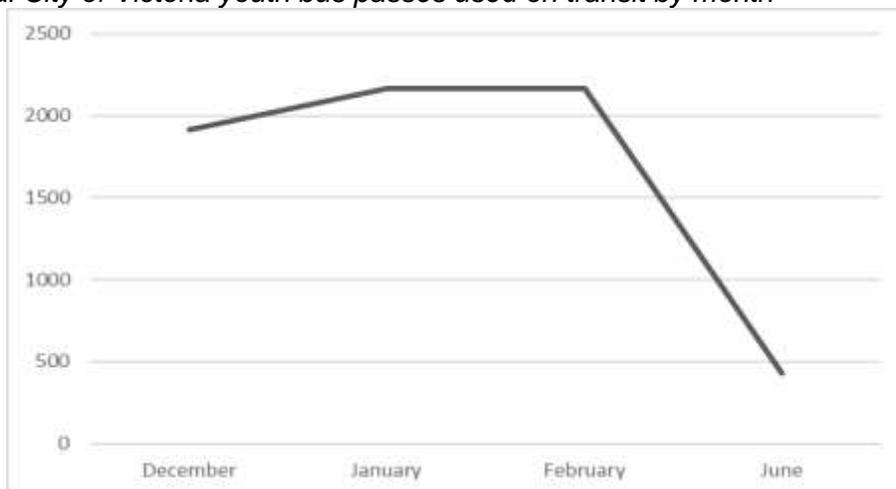
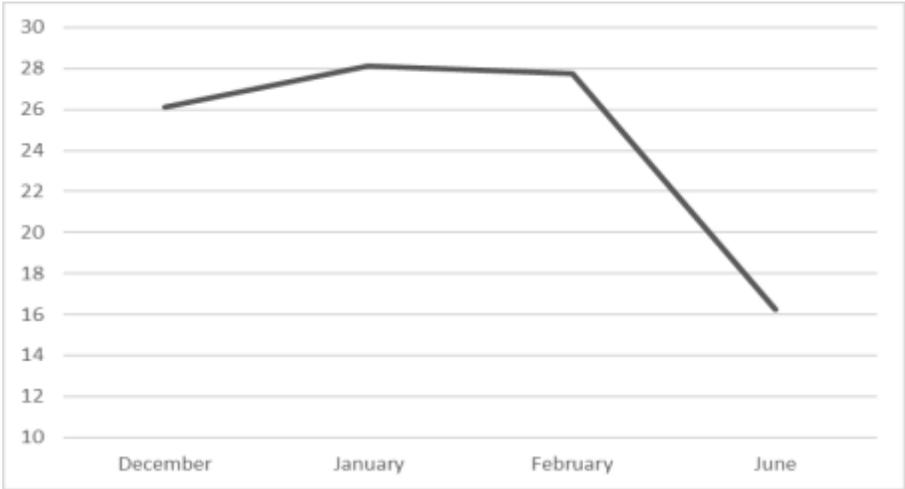


Chart 2: Average rides per pass for City of Victoria youth bus pass program by month



Under the pilot program agreement, the City of Victoria is paying the Commission \$81,000 per month. Citing decreased demand and lower transit ridership as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Victoria is not seeking to pursue a steady-state U-PASS program after the pilot's expiration at the end of August. In place of the U-PASS program, the City of Victoria has reached out to BC Transit to contract a bulk purchase agreement, which is an approved discount program and available to organizations that regularly purchase large volumes of fare products. Under this agreement, the City of Victoria will receive a ten per cent discount on the cost of a youth/senior monthly pass and will pay the Commission \$40.50 for each pass distributed to youth within the municipality.

As per a report to its Committee of the Whole on July 16, 2020, the City of Victoria was distributing on average 2,367 pre-pandemic, with the number dropping to 620 in June following the resumption of fare collection. The City of Victoria estimates that 700 youth per month will continue to request a bus pass during the fall, which will result in roughly \$28,350 in revenue for the Commission.

Table 1: Revenue comparisons for City of Victoria bus pass program

Program	Monthly Rate	Participants	Total Revenue
U-PASS Pilot	\$11.25	7,200	\$81,000
Bulk Purchase	\$40.50	700	\$28,350

The City of Victoria has reaffirmed its commitment to providing free access to transit to its youth residents and intends to monitor the uptake of its youth bus pass program using the bulk purchase model. Should a U-PASS or similar program be requested by the City of Victoria in the future, BC Transit would prepare a report to the Commission for approval at that time.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Victoria Regional Transit Commission receive this report for **INFORMATION**.

Respectfully,

Ryan Dennis
Manager, Sales and Revenue