

PUBLIC SERVICES POLICY



POLICY	Affordable Bus Pass Program
CATEGORY	Departmental
AUTHORITY	Public Services
RELATED POLICIES	
APPROVED BY	Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Public Services
EFFECTIVE DATE	
REVISION DATE	

POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Guelph provides residents and visitors with public transit services to access economic, social and cultural opportunities. The City of Guelph also recognizes that residents living in a low income household have specific financial challenges that can reduce their access to public transit. The Affordable Bus Pass Program is designed to minimize these barriers by offering eligible program participants the option of purchasing monthly passes at discounted rates.

PURPOSE

Overall Program Outcome Goals

The Affordable Bus Pass policy better enables Guelph residents who are living in a low income household to access transit through the purchase of monthly passes at a more affordable, discounted rate. The outcomes of the Affordable Bus Pass Program are:

- Enabling more residents who are living in a low income household, to purchase monthly transit passes and use transit services
- Making a positive impact on the budget of residents living in a low income household by enabling them to spend less on transportation costs and allocate more of their budget to basic needs such as food, clothing, child care and shelter
- Improving program participant's perceptions of overall wellbeing, and improving wellbeing through increased opportunities to participate in and contribute to their communities in ways such as; accessing educational, recreational, sporting and cultural opportunities; accessing medical care; reliable transportation so getting to work is not a barrier; and maintaining connections to family and friends.

Operational Program Goals

The program policy and procedures will:

- Provide a clear understanding of the program rules
- Ensure that the program is administered in a way that is citizen-centered, inclusive and respectful
- Effectively meet the overall program outcome goals
- Be consistent, transparent and equitable to all transit users
- Support access to Transit for eligible residents

DEFINITIONS

“Access”

The program is easily available to eligible residents. Barriers are addressed as they are identified.

“City”

The Corporation of the City of Guelph.

“Citizen centered”

Staff considers and incorporates residents’ needs and concerns when designing and delivering the program. This process ensures that the program caters to the specific needs of program participants.

“Dependant”

A person living in the same household who relies on another member of the household for financial support. Generally this includes; a biological or adopted child or grandchild, a parent or grandparent

“Discounted Rate”

A price that is lower than usual price a customer can expect to pay to purchase a monthly pass.

“Family income”

The combined annual income earned by a household before-tax.

“Household”

One or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption.

“Low income”

A combined household annual income that is lower than the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Off (LICO). Staff will update the Low Income Cut-Off on an annual basis as it is made available to the public, usually during the month of June each year.

“Monthly Pass”

An accepted Guelph Transit fare media that provides the purchaser with unlimited trips on Guelph Transit. Each pass is valid for one calendar month.

“Program Participant”

An eligible resident who has applied to and been accepted onto the Affordable Bus Pass Program.

“Resident”

All persons who reside (live) within Guelph City limits.

“Transparent”

Stakeholders and residents can clearly see how and why decisions are made.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Community Investment staff are responsible for:

- The ongoing development and improvement of the Affordable Bus Pass program, policy and supporting procedures
- The design and delivery of appropriate administrative practices associated with the
 - Affordable Bus Pass application and approval processes
 - The development and training of staff involved in administration, customer service and pass sales
 - Development and reporting of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the program
 - Development of appropriate communications materials to support the program application, outreach and communication
 - Maintaining relationships with relevant support agencies to ensure potentially eligible residents are aware of and can easily access the program

Guelph Transit staff is responsible for:

- Providing input into the development and improvement of the Affordable Bus Pass Program including policy and supporting procedures
- Processing pass sales at Guelph Transit sales locations
- Maintaining the operational pass inventory, distributing passes to sales locations and reconciling at month’s end

ServiceGuelph and Recreation staff is responsible for:

- Providing input into the development and improvement of the Affordable Bus Pass Program including policy and supporting procedures
- Processing pass Affordable Bus sales at City locations

1. THE AFFORDABLE BUS PASS PROGRAM

The Affordable Bus Pass Program enables eligible Guelph residents living in a low income household to purchase monthly bus passes at a discounted rate. The program supports improved access to public transit for those experiencing financial barriers. Community Investment will administer the program, with the support of Guelph Transit.

2. FARE

Guelph City Council will approve the fare discount of the monthly ABP annually, in accordance with the City’s Users Fees and Charges By-law (2012)-19330 and subject to all Transit subsidization rates.

3. ELIGIBILITY

To access the program, applicants must satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- Be a resident of the City of Guelph
- Have an annual combined family income at or below the Statistics Canada before-tax Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) table for their family size. The LIM table is updated every year and can be found in Appendix A.

Exclusions

University of Guelph students are not eligible to apply for the program. University of Guelph students have access to the 'UPass' program which is an affordable City Transit pass option specifically designed for students who are enrolled and paying tuition at the University of Guelph in a Full Time, Part Time or Graduate Program.

4. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

Applicants must submit the required documentation along with their completed application form to verify their income.

Current photocopies of **one of the following** forms of government documentation are acceptable for **single adults** applying to the program:

- **Canada Revenue Agency** Personal Income Tax **Notice of Assessment** including address portion. This is not a copy of the personal income tax return. Note: If an applicant cannot submit a copy of their Notice of Assessment, they are encouraged to contact Canada Revenue Agency to request a copy of their "Form C", OR;
- **Canada Revenue Agency** Canada Child Benefit notice (CCB) including address portion. OR;
- **Canada Revenue Agency** Ontario Trillium Benefit notice (OTB) including address portion. OR;
- **Canada Revenue Agency** GST/HST Credit notice including address portion. OR;
- **Ontario Works** Statement of Deposit including address portion, OR;
- **Ontario Works** confirmation of eligibility letter provided by Ontario Works caseworker, OR;
- **Ontario Disability Support Program** Statement of Deposit including address portion, OR;

- **Ontario Disability Support Program** confirmation of eligibility letter provided by Ontario Disability Support Program caseworker.

Current photocopies of **one of the following** forms of government documentation are acceptable for **families** applying to the program:

- **Canada Revenue Agency** Canada Child Benefit notice (CCB) including address portion. OR;
- **Canada Revenue Agency** Ontario Trillium Benefit notice (OTB) including address portion. OR;
- **Canada Revenue Agency** GST/HST Credit notice including address portion. OR;
- **Ontario Works** confirmation of eligibility letter provided by Ontario Works caseworker, OR;
- **Ontario Disability Support Program** confirmation of eligibility letter provided by Ontario Disability Support Program caseworker.

All applicants must be residents of the City of Guelph. If the applicant cannot provide acceptable documentation which includes a Guelph address, additional documentation will be required to support an application.

The following forms of documentation are acceptable as proof of residency within the City of Guelph:

- Lease or rental agreement, OR;
- Utility or phone bill, OR;
- Driver's License or Ontario Photo Card.

Recent immigrants to Canada that do not have the required documentation to support their application can submit a formal Statutory Declaration of Income from Guelph-Wellington Immigrant Services.

5. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Eligibility for the program is for twelve (12) months from the date of approval for the program. Applicants must re-apply to the program annually. The final pass that may be purchased by the program participant is stated in the Notice of Decision letter. Program participants are required to re-apply to the program prior to the end of their approval period to avoid a disruption in service.

Responsibility for informing the City of Guelph of changes to financial, residency or other circumstances pertaining to the Affordable Bus Pass (ABP) application and eligibility is the responsibility of the program participant. The program participant must notify the City of changes within thirty (30) days of the change taking effect.

If the program participant fails to inform the City of these changes, the City reserves the right to terminate eligibility for the program.

When an eligible resident becomes a program participant, they must abide by the following Affordable Bus Pass conditions of use.

- Purchased passes are only for use by the registered program participant to whom the pass has been issued. Passes cannot be sold, transferred, traded, given away or shared with anyone else.
- The City of Guelph will not replace lost or stolen passes.
- The pass can be used on all City of Guelph Transit vehicles, including Guelph Mobility. Passes may be used on non-City vehicles that are scheduled by Guelph Mobility through their scheduling office.

The City reserves the right to terminate the eligibility of a participant if they are found in breach of the policy.

6. THIRD PARTY PICK-UPS

Program participants can authorize a third party to purchase an affordable bus pass on their behalf up to four times per calendar year. The following process must be followed each time a third party pick up is required.

Process and Documentation

The authorized third party must present the following documentation at a sales location, to purchase a pass on behalf of the program participant:

- An Affordable Bus Pass Third Party Authorization Form completed by the authorizing program participant (i.e. affordable bus pass holder); and
- A clear photocopy of the program participant's government-issued photo identification; and
- The third party's valid government-issued photo identification

7. DESIGNATED SUPPORT WORKERS

During the application process, program participants can designate a Personal Support Worker (PSW) or caseworker from a human and social services support agency to purchase an affordable bus pass on their behalf. The following process must be followed each time a third party pick up is required.

Process and Documentation

The designated support worker must present the following documentation at a sales location, to purchase a pass on behalf of the program participant:

- The third party's valid government-issued photo identification , or agency-issued photo identification

The City reserves the right to terminate the authorization of the designated support worker to purchase passes on behalf of the program participant if they are found in breach of the policy.

8. ACCESSIBILITY

The City of Guelph adheres to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and plans its programs, such as the Affordable Bus Pass program, with accessibility in mind.

To provide feedback related to accessibility, to learn more about accessible City services, to request program information in an accessible format, or for more information about the AODA, contact the Accessibility Services Coordinator at 519-822-1260 extension: 2670

9. POLICY REVIEW

Public Services staff will review the Affordable Bus Pass Policy on an annual basis, or more often should the need arise.

10. PROGRAM MONITORING AND REPORTING

Summary annual program results will be reported in Service Area annual reports.

11. COLLECTION AND USE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Personal information is being collected and will be used to qualify applicants for City of Guelph subsidy programs. This information will be shared with City staff who require it for their work as part of providing and evaluating City of Guelph subsidy programs. As appropriate, limited personal information (excluding medical or financial information) may be shared with collaborating agencies, including but not limited to: Ontario Works and Community Living (a complete list of collaborating agencies is provided under Schedule "A" to the Affordable Bus Pass Program Policy).

Personal information is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001, and in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). For questions regarding the Affordable Bus Pass Program, or to obtain a complete list of collaborating agencies, please contact

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Community Investment by phone at (519) 837-5618 or by email at community@guelph.ca.

For questions regarding the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information please contact the City of Guelph's Information and Access Coordinator by phone at (519) 822-1260 ext. 2349 or by email at privacy@guelph.ca.