

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of Committee of the Whole

From: Ann-Marie Carroll
Acting Commissioner of Transportation

Date: March 18, 2022

Re: Fare and Service Integration Update - GO Transit Fare changes March 2022, including free local transit travel to and from GO Transit Stations

This memorandum advises Council about changes to transit fares, as announced by the Ontario government on March 1, 2022. Beginning March 14, 2022, local transit became free for riders connecting to and from GO Transit on municipal transit systems with GO Transit co-fare agreements.

In September 2020, Council was advised of a Metrolinx and Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area governance structure formed to advance fare and service integration

The governance structure consists of a Region Roundtable, Fare Integration Forum and Fare and Service Integration Working Group. Each group has specific mandates, focusing on aligning key transit fare integration priorities, generating solutions, enhancing collaboration and establishing direction to advance fare and service integration in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

Through the [September 2020](#) report, Council also approved staff-recommended changes to York Region Transit (YRT) fare age categories to align with the other GTHA transit agencies. These changes came into effect July 1, 2021, resulting in fare age category uniformity across the GTHA and reduce transit traveller confusion when purchasing fares across multiple transit systems.

February 2021, the Ministry of Transportation advised a new Fare and Service Integration Provincial-Municipal Table had been established

As reported to Council in [February 2021](#), a new Fare and Service Integration Provincial-Municipal Table was established by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), comprised of senior representatives from transit systems within the GTHA and the broader GO Transit service area.

At the first meeting, a presentation was shared, followed by Metrolinx highlighting previous work by the Fare and Service Integration Forum, including fare age category harmonization across the GTHA.

Fare and Service Integration Provincial-Municipal Table work is planned to be completed and implemented in three phases

The Fare and Service Integration Provincial-Municipal Table Terms of Reference identify a three-phased approach for the Table to move forward with fare and service integration across the GTHA:

- Phase 1 – Foundational Building Blocks - Develop recommendations that build momentum towards regional service integration
- Phase 2 – Fare Integration Approach - Focus on implementing foundational action items to a longer-term fare integration approach
- Phase 3 – Governance and Implementation - Develop an implementation plan to operationalize a regional fare structure

March 1, 2022, the Ontario government announced it was implementing Phase 1 initiatives to make transit more affordable

On March 1, 2022, the Province announced several GO Transit fare changes that harmonized their fares with the other GTHA transit agencies and made it cheaper to ride GO Transit services.

The announced initiatives include:

- **Travellers to receive free transit trips in the 905 area**, when connecting to and from GO Transit, and Metrolinx will provide full subsidy to local transit agencies under the 100% co-fare agreement between local transit agencies and GO Transit.
- **GO Youth and Post-Secondary fare category discounts were increased** for travellers using GO Transit and UP Express - youth between the ages of 13-19 years old and post-secondary students receive a 40% discount compared to a full adult fare. Children under age 12 continue to ride free on GO Transit.
- **GO Transit is introducing an Affordability Pilot for low-income riders, starting with residents of Peel Region** - the pilot will offer a 50% GO Transit discount for eligible travellers using a card and will be rolled out in a phased approach to other transit systems, including York Region. Currently, York Region offers the Transit Assistance Program (TAP) which provides eligible travellers with a 50% discounted single ride, and once 40 trips have been reached, subsequent trips on YRT are free for the remainder of the month.

These changes came into effect starting March 14, 2022.

Metrolinx is providing full subsidy to local transit agencies under the 100% co-fare agreement

The Ride to GO program will allow customers to travel on YRT for free when connecting to or from GO Transit. Metrolinx increased their fare subsidy to York Region from 75% to 100%. If ridership returns to pre-pandemic levels, York Region will be receiving an approximate \$1.9 million subsidy annually to support the 100% co-fare agreement, compared to an approximate \$1.4 million subsidy prior to the Phase 1 changes.

The Province, in partnership with local transit agencies, advised travellers of the new initiatives through a comprehensive communication plan

The Province led the development of a communication plan to announce initiatives coming out of the Fare and Service Integration Provincial-Municipal Table. Staff worked collaboratively with the Province to announce the changes to York Region residents as of March 14.

Staff will continue to update Council on fare and service integration as it progresses.



Ann-Marie Carroll
Acting Commissioner of Transportation



Bruce Macgregor
Chief Administrative Officer

13412459