
TO: MAYOR J. LEHMAN AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

**FROM: B. FORSYTH
SUPERVISOR OF TRANSIT BUSINESS SERVICES**

**NOTED: R. JAMES-REID
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACCESS BARRIE**

**RE: 2017 GEORGIAN COLLEGE UNIVERSAL TRANSIT PASS (U-PASS) REFERENDUM
AND PILOT PROGRAM**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 18, 2017

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with information about the Georgian College U-Pass referendum and a related initiative between the City of Barrie and Georgian College regarding a U-Pass pilot program.

U-pass programs require a fee paid by all the members of a student group that gives them unlimited access to transit for an entire semester. The U-Pass fee is typically much lower than the cost of buying regular passes because the cost of transit fares is redistributed from a smaller group to a larger group. U-Pass programs involve mandatory participation, where some individuals may benefit more directly than others, but have substantial benefits for the student group as a whole. Some of the main benefits include additional travel options contributing to increased ridership, reduced auto travel and pressure on parking facilities, and making it easier for students to live in more distant neighborhoods.

Staff have researched the impact of the U-Pass on other transit agencies, and in some cases it has been reported that student ridership has almost double following the implementation of a U-Pass. If the City of Barrie was to experience similar growth, ridership would increase by approximately 500,000 trips per year.

Georgian College has approached City of Barrie staff with the plan for a student referendum in October of 2017 presenting their students with the opportunity to vote on the U-Pass program. If the referendum is successful, the initial plan would be to introduce the U-Pass program in September of 2018. Georgian College had last attempted a U-Pass referendum in 2015, however it was defeated 59% to 41%.

City of Barrie staff will be working with Georgian College staff to develop a marketing and communications plan to promote the benefits of the U-Pass with hopes that the referendum will be successful.

As part of the marketing plan, Barrie Transit will undertake a pilot program in partnership with Georgian College, in which Georgian College will be contributing \$20,000 to the City of Barrie to offer the students at the downtown campus a U-Pass for the fall 2017 semester. This will help these students get to and from the downtown campus, as well as help to promote the U-Pass program prior to the vote. If the referendum is successful, the City of Barrie will continue to offer this pilot program to the students at the downtown campus through the winter semester, and if unsuccessful the pilot program will end as of December 31, 2017.

Staff will report back to Council when the results of the referendum are finalized.