Staff Memorandum

To:	Mayor A. Nuttall and Members of Council
Subject and Ward(s):	Barrie Transit and School Board Partnership Program Updates
Date:	June 11, 2025
Department Head Approval:	B. Forsyth, Director of Transit and Parking Strategy
Executive Management Approval:	R, James-Reid, General Manager of Access Barrie
CAO Approval:	M. Prowse, Chief Administrative Officer

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide Council with an end of year update on current partnership programs between Barrie Transit and local school boards, including the high school pilot program currently being implemented in partnership with Barrie Transit and the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB).

Since the start of the 2024/25 school year, Barrie Transit has been working with the SCDSB to implement a pilot program aimed at increasing student access to public transit (per Council Direction 24-G-076). The program, referred to as the Service Mirroring Pilot Program, provides students within a designated school bus serviced area with free Barrie Transit passes for the 2024/25 school year.

The results of the 2024/25 school year pilot have been mixed. Feedback from participants and senior school board officials has been positive, but overall student participation has not had significant uptake.

The initial pilot program included a designated area that serviced Innisdale Secondary School. Of the 110 potential participants, 28 students utilized the free pass a total of 525 times (through May 7th, 2025).

City staff, in collaboration with SCDSB administration, have continued to work to engage students eligible for the pilot program throughout the school year. Included in the on-going attempts to increase participation rates was the potential inclusion of a second participating high school location. Unfortunately, once approvals were received from the school board, insufficient time remained in the school year to expand the pilot.

As a part of year end discussions with the SCDSB, the Board has requested the opportunity to repeat the pilot during the 2025/26 school year. City staff agree a more

fulsome pilot is required to fully assess the long-term viability of the program. Upon receipt of commitments from the SCDSB, the City has prepared a two-school pilot for the upcoming school year, to include both Innisdale Secondary School, as well as Maple Ridge Secondary School.

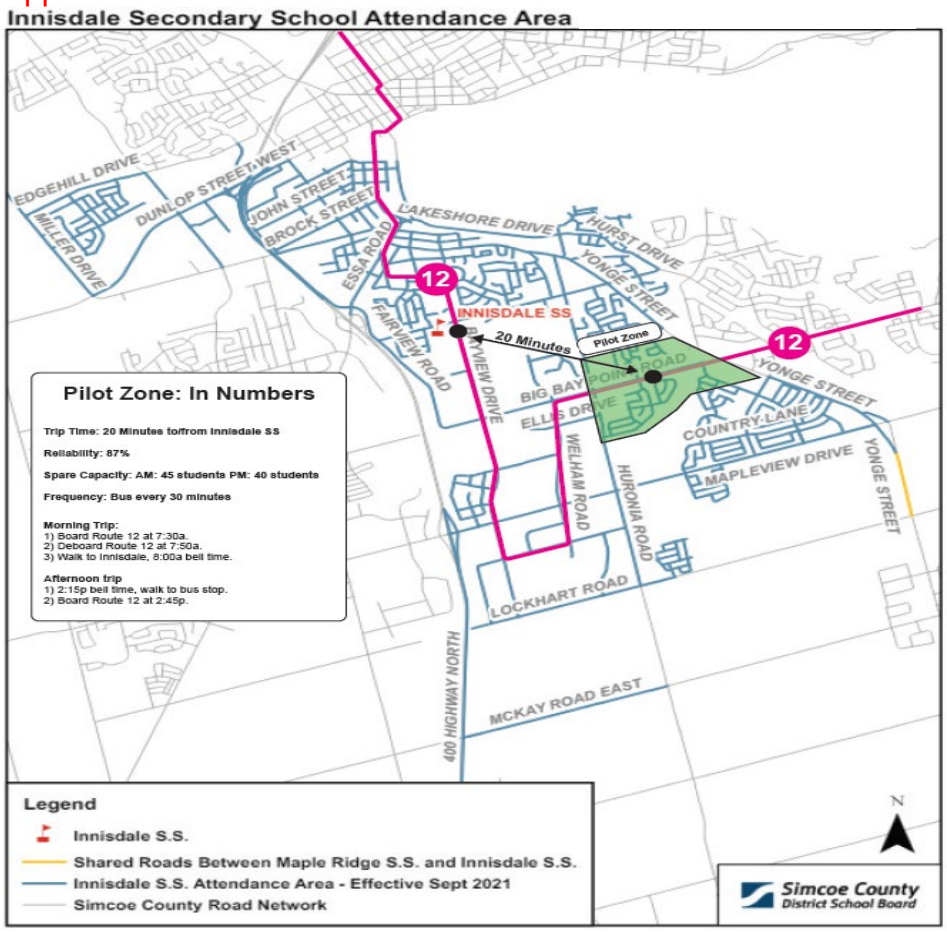
Analysis indicates that the pilot zones could handle the additional capacity without adversely affecting current public transit capacity in these areas. The school board has also committed to increased administrative support, including pre and post kickoff engagement with participating students and their parents.

City staff will continue to work with staff from the SCDSB to provide the pilot program for another school year in 2025/26, unless Council provides different direction.

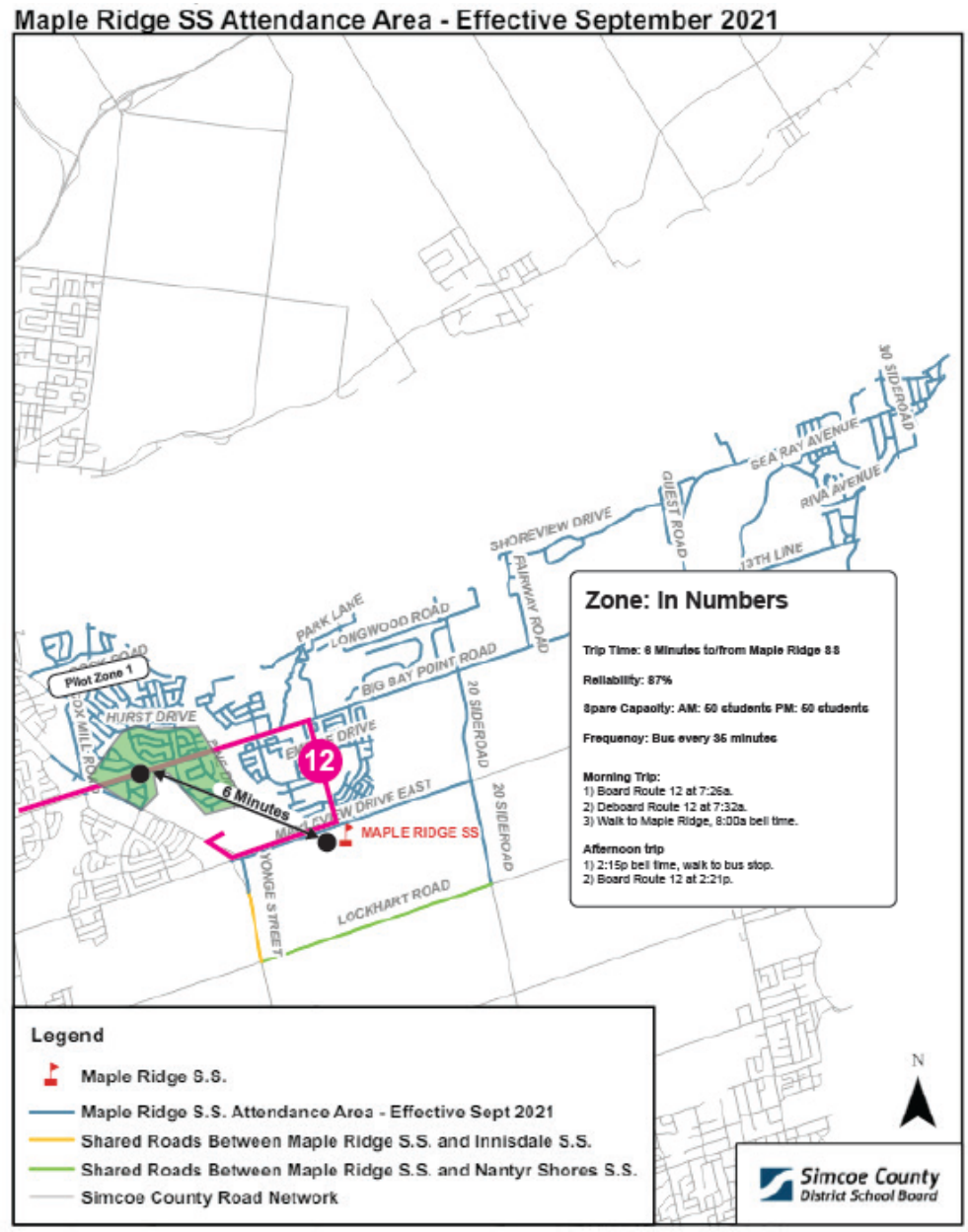
By fostering partnerships between the City and local schools, these programs represent a promising step toward creating sustainable, accessible, and student-centered transportation solutions.

Appendix:

Appendix A –



Appendix B –



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File #:

Pending # (if applicable):