

**Region of Waterloo**

**Transportation Services**

**Transit Services**

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**To:** Sustainability, Infrastructure, and Development Committee

**Meeting Date:** February 11, 2025

**Report Title:** Grand River Transit – 2025 ATP Fare Proposal

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**1. Recommendation**

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo approve the Affordable Transit Program (ATP) fare changes as outlined in report TSD-TRS-25-003, dated February 11, 2025. The proposed fares will come into effect on July 1, 2025, as follows:

- Monthly Pass - ATP - \$47 (reduced from current \$48)
- Stored Value – ATP - \$1.35 (reduced from current \$1.50)
- MobilityPLUS ATP Tickets (strip of 5) - \$6.75 (reduced from \$7.50)

**2. Purpose / Issue:**

This report outlines proposed changes to Affordable Transit Program (ATP) fare products. The recommendations follow changes adopted in the 2025 Regional Budget. The changes apply a consistent discount for ATP customers across all fare products.

**3. Strategic Plan:**

Equitable Services and Opportunities: ATP ensures transit services are inclusive, accessible and equitable. Climate Aligned Growth (foster car-alternative options): Affordable transit fare options increase transit ridership, increase transportation choices, expand access to housing and reduce car dependency.

**4. Report Highlights:**

- As part of the 2025 Regional Budget process, the Fees & Charges By-law was amended to increase the GRT Adult and MobilityPLUS Monthly Pass price to \$104 per month as of July 1, 2025.
- The ATP monthly pass price was based on a 50% discount of the equivalent fare product. By increasing the GRT Monthly Pass, the ATP Monthly Pass also increases. Council direction to maintain the ATP Monthly Pass price at its current value of \$48 per month, effectively increased the discount on the ATP Monthly Pass fare product from 50% to 54%.

- Because stored value was not proposed to increase from the current fare, the related ATP stored value rate was not adjusted as part of the Fees and Charges By-law. There is now a disparity between ATP discounts for stored value and for monthly passes, creating inequitable fare pricing for ATP customers.
- To provide consistency for ATP customers, it is proposed that all ATP fare products be set at a 55% discount of the equivalent fare product.

## 5. Background:

The Affordable Transit Program is designed to assist lower income households with access to transit services. Eligibility is determined by an income threshold, coming from the Market Basket Measure, which is Canada's official measure of poverty based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services.

ATP fare products were originally set using a 45% reduction of the full fare in each category. This number was adjusted to a 50% reduction in 2023. The current proposal would have a 55% reduction in all categories of ATP fares.

The proposed fares are shown in the table below.

	Fares Effective July 1, 2025	
	2025 Fares* Current as Approved	Revised 2025 Fares Proposed at 55%
Monthly Pass	\$104	\$104
Monthly Pass – ATP	\$48	\$47
Stored Value	\$3	\$3
Stored Value - ATP	\$1.50	\$1.35
MobilityPLUS Tickets (5)	\$15	\$15
MobilityPLUS Tickets (5) - ATP	\$7.50	\$6.75

## 6. Communication and Engagement with Area Municipalities and the Public

**Area Municipalities:** N/A

**Public:** Members of the public provided input on transit fares as part of the 2025 Budget consultation sessions.

## 7. Financial Implications:

The proposed changes would decrease fare revenue by \$30,000. Increased ridership due to lower fare prices will offset \$10,000. The remaining gap will be absorbed through GRT's customer acquisition budget.

This will result in the changes being cost neutral on 2025 fare revenues.

## 8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

The new fares would take effect on July 1, 2025, at the same time as the other currently approved fare changes. If the approval of the proposed fares is delayed, there may not be sufficient time to have electronic fare system adjustments made in time for the July 1 fare change.

Transit Services will work with Clerks to have the appropriate changes made to the Fees and Charges By-law.

All transit fares are being evaluated as part of the new Grand River Transit Business Plan. A recommendation on the overall fare policy strategy will be part of the Business Plan report that will come before Council later this year.

## 9. Attachments: N/A

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**Approved By:** Doug Spooner, Acting Commissioner, Transportation Services