



TO: Michael Van Milligen, City Manager

FROM: Candace Eudaley, Director of Transit Operations

SUBJECT: Transit Advisory Board Student Fare Recommendation

DATE: April 20, 2016

PURPOSE

This memo is being provided to outline the establishment of the proposed student fare.

BACKGROUND

Student rides totaled 161,000 in FY15 and are expected to be even higher in FY16. Along with the increase in ridership, the number of issues with student riders and complaints about safety from general public passengers have also increased. The Transit Advisory Board members who ride the bus believe that students intimidate general public riders and deter choice riders during the early morning and afternoon as students fill the buses, are loud, profane and aggressive.

During the Transit Budget hearing, council members asked staff to explore options for students paying to ride the bus.

All Iowa cities, with the exception of Davenport, charge a student fare ranging from \$0.60 to \$1.55 per ride. School Year passes are available in about half of the cities for a cost ranging from \$160 to \$200.

The Transit Advisory Board has had lengthy discussion of student accountability and payment for rides over the course of the past year. The board requested that the Transit Manager talk with DCSD staff regarding their openness to an annual pass and fee to be implemented using swipe card technology. The Transit Manager met with DCSD Director of School and Community Relations, Jefferson and Washington Middle School Principals and all parties were in agreement that a minimal annual fee and the tracking capabilities of the swipe card would be beneficial from both school and transit administration standpoints.

The Transit Advisory Board discussed the merits of offering an annual student bus pass as well as a student fare to help deter students from riding short distances for the sake of riding. They also discussed the benefits of having the ability to truly ban a student from riding who continually breaks the rules while on board.

DISCUSSION

The Transit Advisory Board made a formal recommendation at their March 2016 meeting to establish a student fare type. In this proposed scenario, all passengers will either be swiping a card when they enter the bus or putting cash or coins in to the farebox.

Under the Transit Advisory Board's recommendation, each student aged 11-18 will show a current year school ID when they purchase their \$10 annual pass. They will be assigned a swipe card and ID that can be deactivated in the case of poor behavior.

If a student aged 11-18 does not buy the annual pass, they can pay \$0.75, the standard half-fare, by showing a current school year ID.

Students under 11 years of age would continue to ride for free, but would need to request the student swipe card for age verification.

The Transit Advisory Board recommended that these changes go into effect with the 2016-2017 school year. Staff would begin transitioning students to the new cards over the summer.

The Transit Advisory Board advised that staff either be available or coordinate with the school district to sell the annual passes during student orientation as well as where Jule bus passes are sold.

FINANCIAL

There will be revenue related to this item, however, it is difficult to estimate. If 500 students purchase the annual pass, fare revenue for fixed-route would increase by \$5,000.

RECOMMENDATION

In concurrence with the Transit Advisory Board recommendation, I recommend that City Council approve the student fare type as presented.

cc: Jennifer Larson, Budget Director
Maurice Jones, Economic Development Director