

Administration Report

Original signed by: City Manager Johnson

Report Date: June 9, 2021

Meeting Date: June 15, 2021

To: City Manager

From: Director of Community Services

Subject: Transit Electronic Fare Collection System

PURPOSE

To obtain approval from Council for the City to participate in the BC Transit Electronic Fare Collection System program.

SUMMARY

- The City has an opportunity to participate in BC Transit's Electronic Fare Collection System project which will introduce a new fare collection technology on transit buses in select communities.
- Currently Quesnel Transit has no electronic fare box system, using a simple cashbox and visual validation of pass products. All of the other transit systems that are part of the Electronic Fare Collection System program use GFI cash box systems.
- The opportunity to participate in the program is being extended to include Quesnel even though we do not currently use a GFI cash box system because BC Transit would like students at the College of New Caledonia and the University of Northern British Columbia to have the same U-Pass experience in both Quesnel and Prince George.
- Prince George is one of the communities included in the Electronic Fare Collection System program.
- The Electronic Fare Collection System project will introduce new forms of payment to transit users including a mobile app and contactless credit card.
- The system components that riders can utilize are a mobile app, a web portal, and the onboard validator, allowing riders to create an account to purchase and validate their fare products.
- In addition, a comprehensive suite of back end tools will support fare administration and create new reporting capabilities.
- The program is expected to take a number of years to develop and implement. Implementation is expected to occur in approximately 2024.
- The estimated cost to the City to implement the Electronic Fare Collection System is \$30,000/year which will not commence until the program is implemented.
- The primary benefits to implementing the Electronic Fare Collection System is improved rider convenience, reduced cash handling by City staff, and improved data reporting.
- The program will provide new and improved customer service to all of the communities participating but since the Quesnel Transit system does not currently utilize any sort of



electronic cash box system, participation in the program will result in a significant upgrade in service to Quesnel riders than will be experienced in other participating communities.

- Cash payment will continue to remain an option for riders who prefer to pay cash or who do not have a smart phone or credit card.
- Finance Department staff currently spend over 100 hours/yr. processing cash that is collected for transit fares, almost all of it in the form of coins. Implementation of this program will significantly reduce the amount of cash collected and reduce the staff time required to handle, sort, and count, improving staff productivity by allowing finance department staff to engage in other higher priority tasks.
- Currently much of the reporting and data we receive on transit use in Quesnel is limited and frequently relies on manual observation and headcounts by drivers. Implementing the new system will allow BC Transit to provide significantly improved reporting regarding transit use in Quesnel.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council commit to the City's participation in the BC Transit Electronic Fare Collection System program and direct staff to work with BC Transit to implement the program in Quesnel at an estimated cost of \$30,000/yr. for the municipal partner share of the cost, commencing once the program is implemented in approximately 2024.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- The estimated cost for the City to participate in the program is \$30,000/yr., starting when the program is implemented in approximately 2024.