



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Planning & Building Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Brian Hillman, Director Planning & Building Services

Date to Council: September 14, 2021

Report Number: PBS-2021-41

Subject: Tecumseh Transit Service (TTS)
January to June 2021 Status Report
OUR FILE: T03 TTS

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That PBS-2021-41 – Tecumseh Transit Service (TTS), January to June 2021 Status Report, **be received.**

Executive Summary

This Report provides Council with an overview of ridership totals for the Tecumseh Transit Service (TTS) for the first six months (January to June) of the 2021 calendar year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, TTS continues to experience low ridership levels with no revenues being generated. The lack of revenue during this time is due to the decision of the Town to eliminate the transit fare early on in the COVID-19 emergency (March 23, 2020). Elimination of transit fares has been a measure implemented by many transit operations across the country in an effort to keep transit riders and drivers safe while continuing to provide this essential service to the community. The revenue shortfall is expected to be fully offset from Provincial grant funding through the Safe Restart Agreement (SRA) program.

Background

The Tecumseh Transit Service (TTS) is now mid-way into its twelfth year of operation since it was introduced to the northerly urban area of the Town in December of 2009. The TTS operates on a circuitous route with a one-hour headway covering 30 kilometres and 43 stops.

The Town manages the service but contracts the operation and maintenance of the two Town-owned buses to First Student Canada (FSC).

The purpose of this Planning Report is to provide Council with a ridership and revenue overview of the Tecumseh Transit Service (TTS) for the first six months (January to June) of the 2021 calendar year. As expected, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related Provincial Orders, there has been a decrease in overall ridership. No revenues have been generated since Council authorized the waiving of transit fees effective March 23, 2020. This cancellation of fees continued to the end of this reporting period. This measure has been implemented by many transit operations across the country in an effort to keep transit riders and drivers safe while continuing to provide this essential service to the community.

Comments

January to June 2021 Ridership Analysis

In the first three months of the year, the TTS experienced lower average daily ridership when compared against the same period for 2020 due to the fact that the first three months of 2020 stats were primarily pre-COVID. The balance of the months (April to June) experienced an increase in ridership levels when compared to the same months in 2020, which were affected by the pandemic. Monthly average daily ridership for the first six months of 2021 ranged from a high of 38 riders per day in March to a low of 25 riders per day in January (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1
Average Daily Ridership by Month
2020 and Jan-June 2021

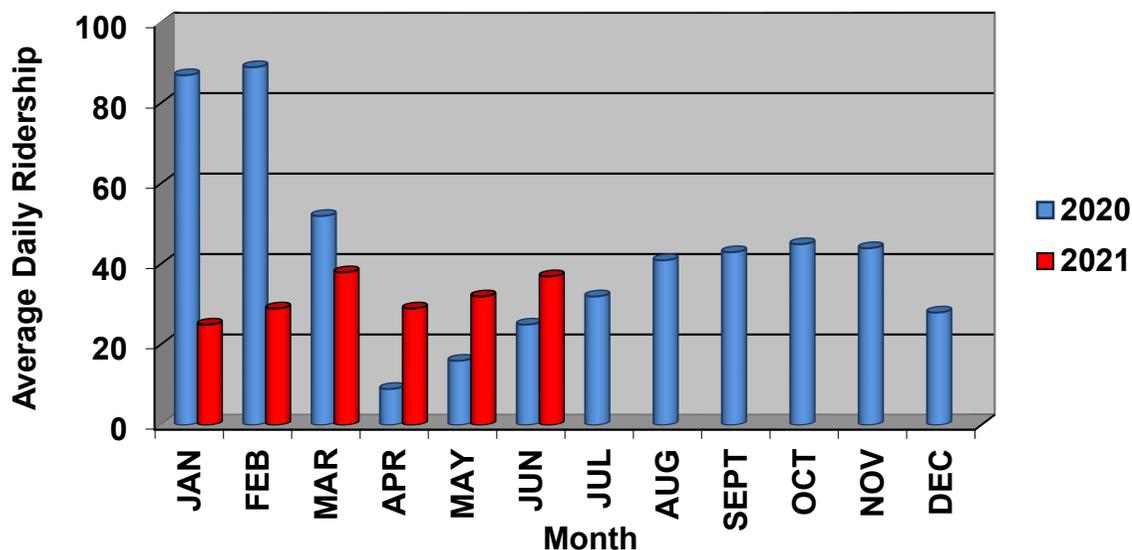


Figure 2 below illustrates ridership levels in the form of total monthly ridership from January 2020 to the end of June 2021. Similar to average daily ridership levels, total monthly ridership

for the first three months of the year was lower when compared against the same period for 2020 and the balance of the months (April to June) experienced an increase in total monthly ridership levels when compared to the same months in 2020, which were affected by the pandemic. The highest monthly ridership total in the first six months of 2021 was recorded in March with 1,023 boardings.

Figure 2
Total Monthly Ridership
2020 and January-June 2021

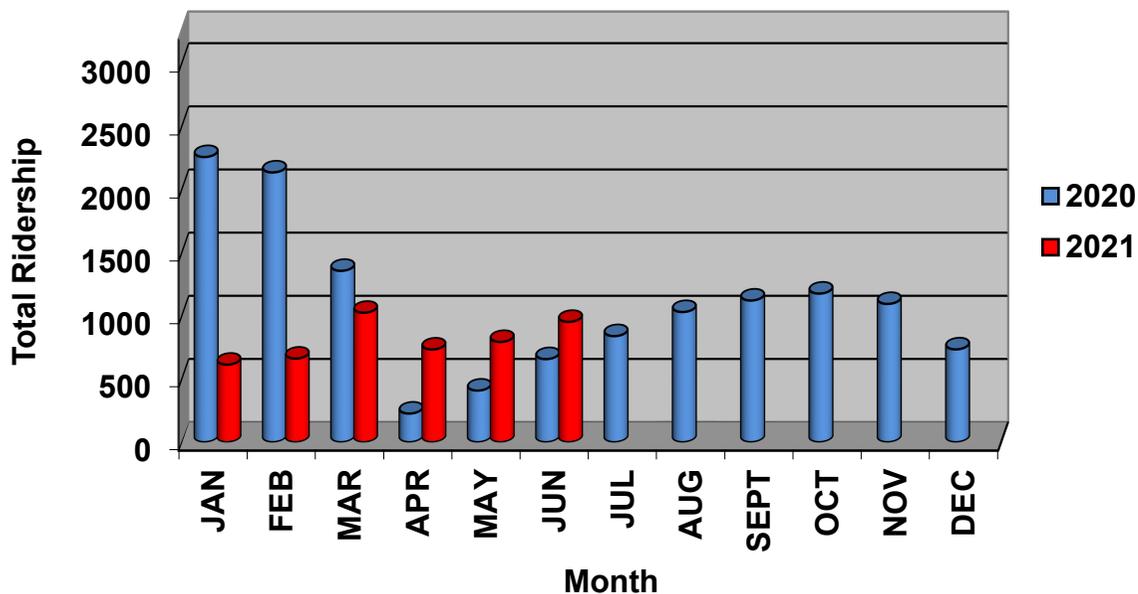


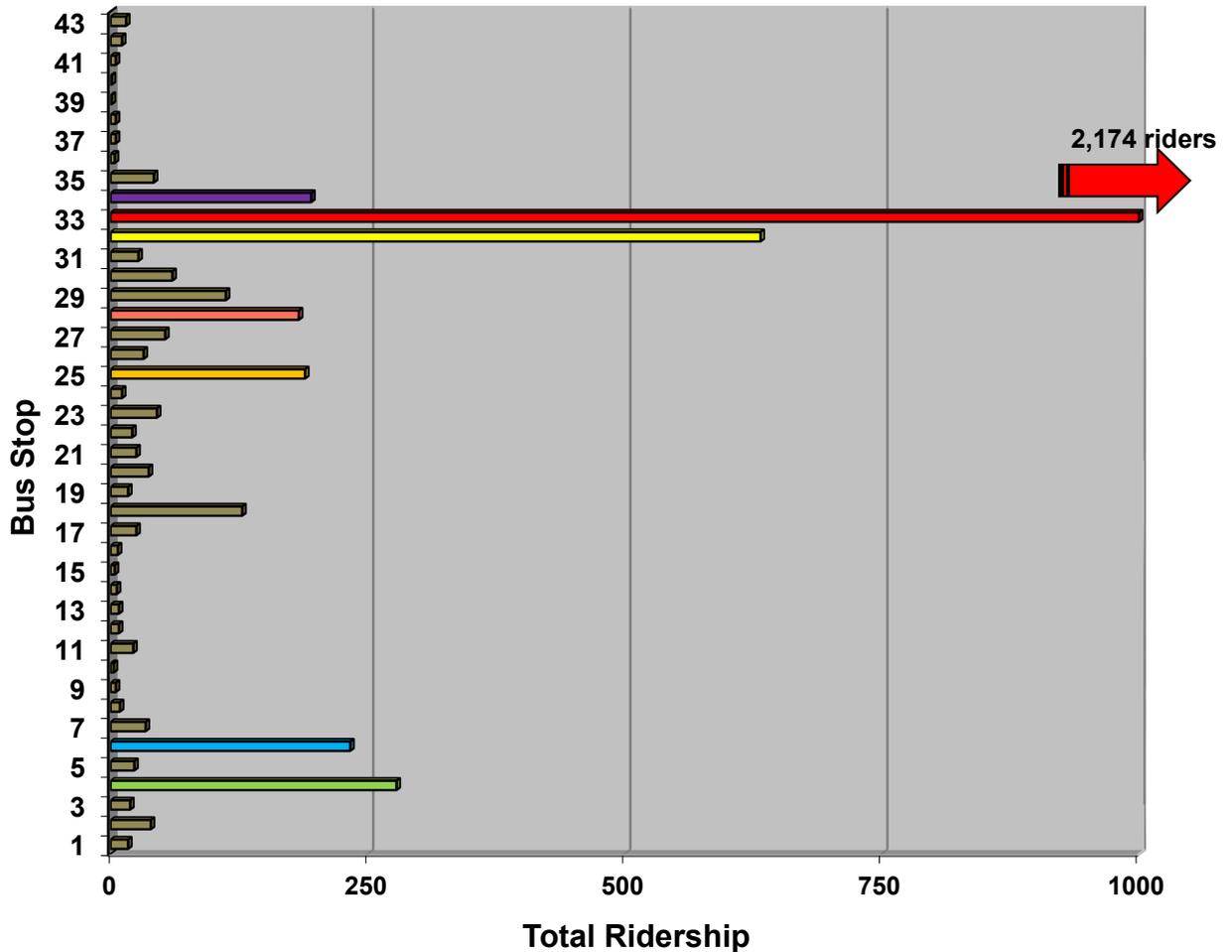
Figure 3 below and Attachment 1 illustrate ridership levels by bus stop for the first six months of 2021. The reduction in overall ridership levels did not impact where riders boarded the TTS, as the most frequently used stops continued to be the ones that were the most popular pre-pandemic. The bus stop at Tecumseh Mall (red bar) continues to be the most popular stop/destination with 2,174 passengers boarding the TTS bus at this location, accounting for 45.6% of all passengers for the first six months of 2021.

The next most popular stops for this period were:

- the bus stop immediately preceding the Tecumseh Mall stop on Southfield Drive (yellow bar – 13.2% of passengers);
- the Food Basic grocery store plaza on Manning Road (green bar – 5.8% of passengers);
- the Zehrs grocery store plaza on Manning Road (blue bar – 4.9% of passengers); and
- the bus stop immediately after the Tecumseh Mall stop at Southfield Drive (purple bar), the bus stop on Lesperance Road at Little River (orange bar), and the bus stop on

Shawnee Road at Arbour Street (pink bar), which each generated between 3.8 and 4.1% of passengers.

Figure 3
Total Ridership by Bus Stop
January to June 2021



As illustrated in Figure 4 below, the TTS was in highest demand during the early morning period of 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m., accounting for 16.2% of the total ridership, and the afternoon peak period between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m., with this two-hour period accounting for 23.5% of the total ridership. Ridership levels are at their lowest during the last run of the daily service in the hours of 5-6 p.m.

Figure 4
Total Ridership by Time of Day
January to June 2021

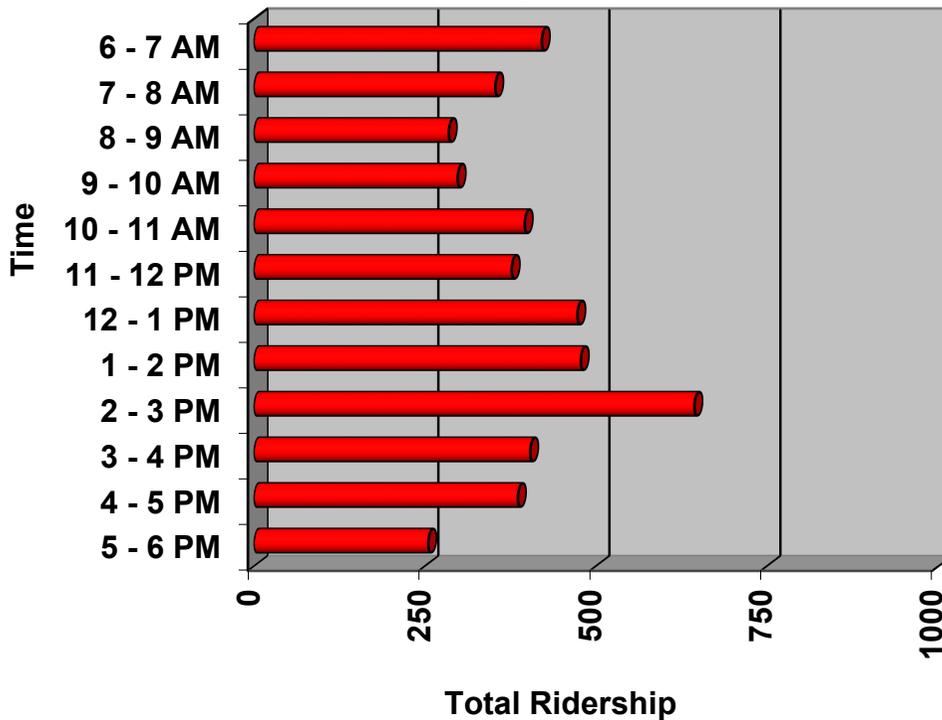
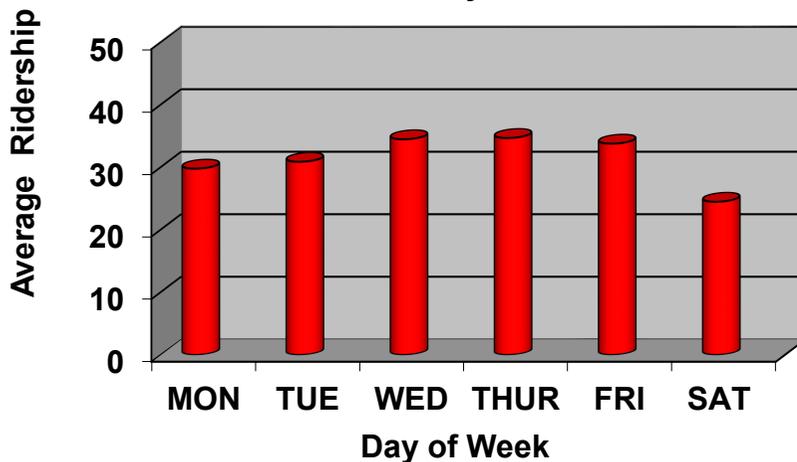


Figure 5 below illustrates that, with the exception of Saturday, there does not seem to be any significant differentiation amongst the days of the week on which people are using the transit system. Lower ridership on Saturdays is attributed to fewer places of employment being open.

Figure 5
Average Daily Ridership by Day of the Week
January to June 2021



January to June 2021 Ridership Revenue Analysis

As noted above, no revenue was generated through fare box revenues or the sale of monthly bus passes as the TTS continues to operate as a free service during the pandemic.

Summary

TTS ridership levels continue to be below pre-pandemic levels, however ridership levels for 2021 have increased when compared to the similar pandemic-affected months of 2020. Despite the lower ridership during the COVID-19 emergency, the TTS remains an essential service for many in the community.

It should also be noted that work has begun on the on-demand transit pilot program that was authorized by Council at its July 27, 2021 Regular Meeting. A number of meetings have been held with Blaise Transit – the on-demand transit firm retained by the Town – with the goal of launching the on-demand service in December of this year. Updates on its progress will be communicated to Council.

Consultations

First Student Canada
Financial Services

Financial Implications

As identified in this report, collection of bus fares has been suspended during the pandemic and has resulted in a revenue shortfall of approximately \$11,000 year-to-date as compared to an already reduced budget that contemplated a COVID impact.

The revenue shortfall is expected to be fully offset from grant funding that has either already been allocated to the Town or has been committed to the Town, through the Safe Restart Agreement (SRA) program, details of which are referenced in reports FS-2021-03 and FS-2021-04.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2019-22 Strategic Priorities
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- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Make the Town of Tecumseh an even better place to live, work and invest through a shared vision for our residents and newcomers. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Ensure that Tecumseh's current and future growth is built upon the principles of sustainability and strategic decision-making. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Integrate the principles of health and wellness into all of Tecumseh's plans and priorities. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Steward the Town's "continuous improvement" approach to municipal service delivery to residents and businesses. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Demonstrate the Town's leadership role in the community by promoting good governance and community engagement, by bringing together organizations serving the Town and the region to pursue common goals. |

Communications

Not applicable

Website

Social Media

News Release

Local Newspaper

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

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Reviewed by:

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Brian Hillman, MA, MCIP, RPP
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Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

**Attachment
Number**

**Attachment
Name**

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January to June 2021 Ridership Totals by Bus Stop Map