



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Planning & Building Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Chad Jeffery, Manager Planning Services

Date to Council: February 12, 2019

Report Number: PBS-2019-01

Subject: Annual Status Report on the Tecumseh Transit Service for 2018
OUR FILE: T03 TTS

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Planning and Building Services Department Report No. 2019-01 **be received.**

Background

The Tecumseh Transit Service (TTS) has now completed its ninth year of operation after being introduced to the northerly urban area of the Town in December of 2009. The TTS operates on a recently revised circuitous route with a one-hour headway covering 30 kilometres and 43 stops. This revised route was introduced in May of 2018 after an extensive public consultation process that resulted in some bus stop locations being removed and others added in an attempt to minimize delays in service. The Town manages the service but contracts out the operation and maintenance of the two Town-owned buses to First Student Canada (FSC).

The purpose of this Report is to provide Council with a statistical overview of the TTS for the 2018 calendar year and to provide an outlook of initiatives anticipated for 2019.

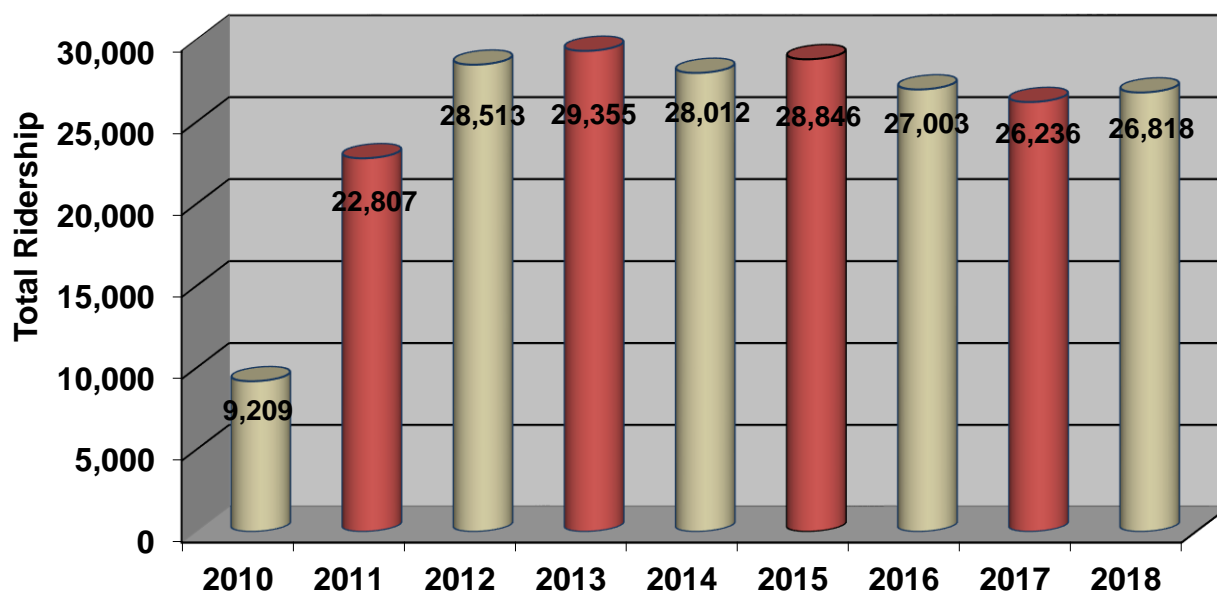
Comments

Ridership Use Analysis

The current route is conveniently accessible to 65 percent of the population of Tecumseh with accessibility being based on a 400-metre walking distance to a bus stop. Within the northerly settlement area of the Town, 72 percent of the population have reasonable access to the service. When only the urban area north of County Road 22 is considered, the route is accessible to nearly 90 percent of the population. Over the past nine years, the TTS has served over 223,000 riders and, in the past seven years, has maintained an annual ridership of between 26,000 and 29,000.

Total ridership in 2018 was 26,818 (see Figure 1 below). This figure represents an increase of 582 passengers from the 2017 total ridership level of 26,236. This increase equates to approximately two additional riders using the TTS per day throughout the year and cannot be attributed to an increase in any specific bus stop. Based on the statistics over the past nine years, it appears as though the yearly ridership levels have stagnated, hovering in the 26,000-29,000 ridership range.

Figure 1
Total Yearly Ridership
2010 to 2018



The average daily ridership by month for 2018 was relatively consistent when compared against the 2017 monthly averages (see Figure 2 below). In 2018, the TTS reached a monthly average daily ridership peak of 97 passengers in June. This peak was in part due to the “Seniors Ride for Free” initiative that took place that month. The second highest average daily ridership months were May and November with 95 passengers. The 2018 overall average annual daily ridership was 88 passengers, which was slightly higher than the 2017 average of 86 passengers per day.

Figure 2
Average Daily Ridership by Month
2017 and 2018

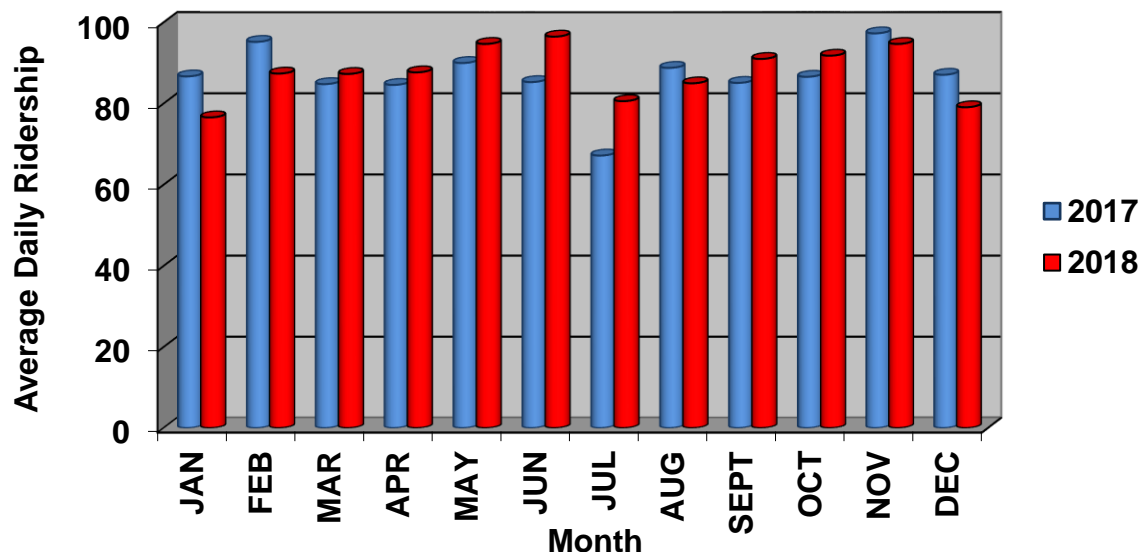


Figure 3 below provides a comparison of total monthly ridership for 2017 and 2018. The 2018 total monthly ridership high of 2,511 occurred in June. It should be noted that the August totals for Figures 2 and 3 include the ridership during the Corn Festival Shuttle Service (although the ridership for the shuttle service was considerably lower over the past two years than it had been in previous years).

Figure 3
Total Monthly Ridership
2017 and 2018

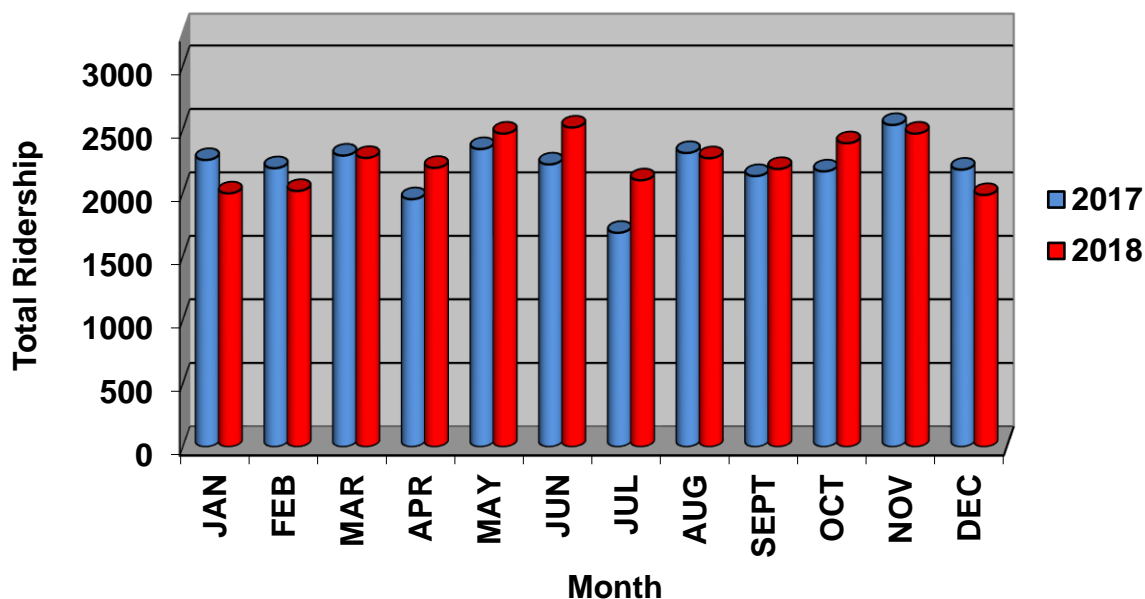
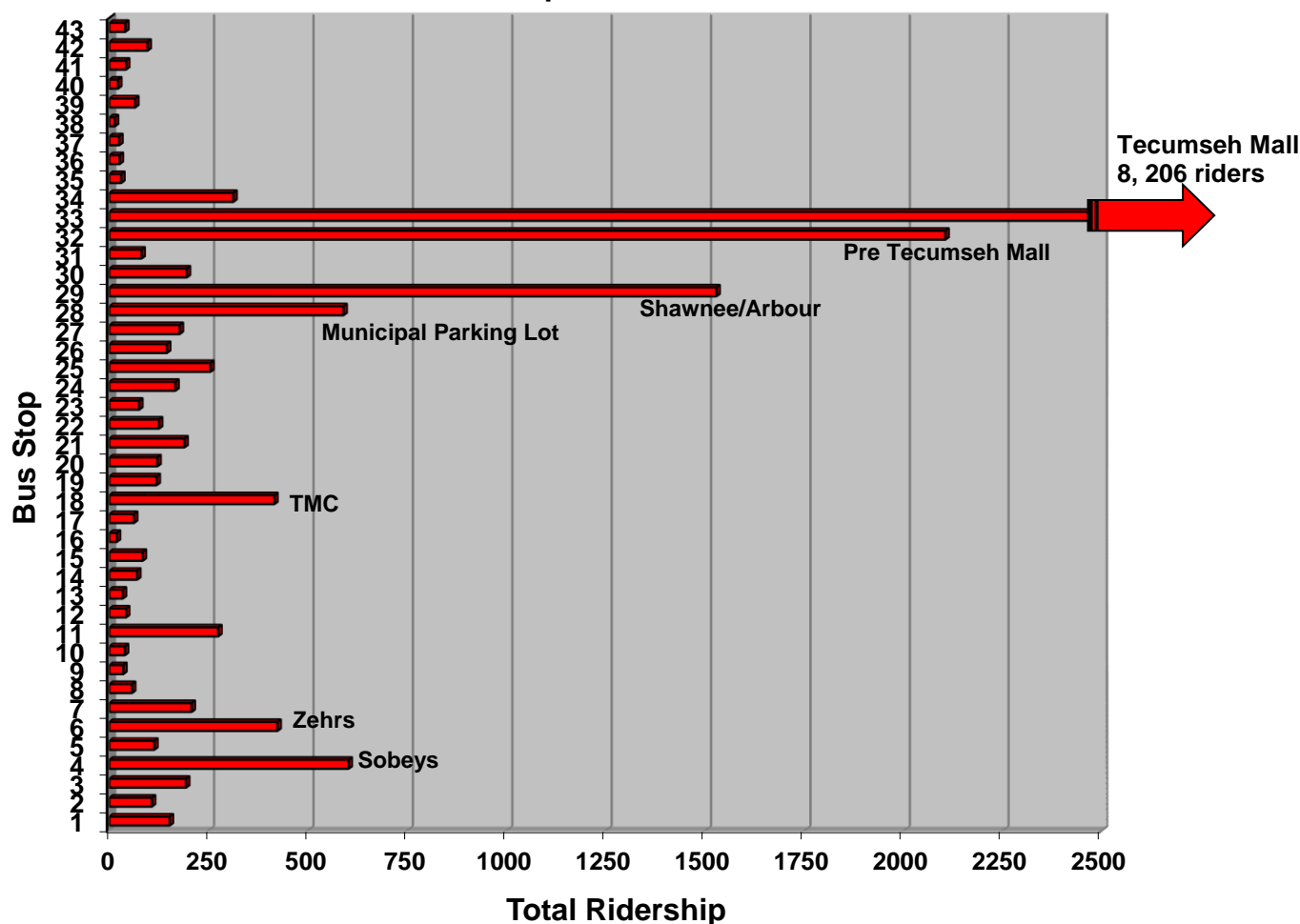


Figure 4 below and Attachment 1 illustrate ridership levels by bus stop for 2018. Ridership levels by bus stop have changed slightly from the previous year, resulting from the modifications that occurred to the TTS route and schedule in May of 2018. As anticipated, stop 33 at Tecumseh Mall was the most popular stop/destination with 46.9% of all passengers boarding the TTS bus at this location. This total is slightly less than the 49.7% of all passengers who boarded the TTS bus at this location in 2017.

The next most popular stops in 2018 were 32 (11.8% of riders), 29 (8.6% of riders), 28 (3.3% of riders) and 4 (3.4% of riders). Respectively, these stops are the bus stop immediately preceding the Tecumseh Mall stop at Southfield Drive, the bus stop at the northwest corner of Shawnee/Arbour, the municipal parking lot on Tecumseh Road (at St. Anne's Street) and the Sobey's plaza in Lakeshore. Other popular bus stops during 2018 included stops 6 (Zehrs Plaza) and 18 (Tecumseh Medical Centre plaza on Tecumseh Road).

Figure 4
Total Ridership by Bus Stop
May to December 2018
Since Inception of New Route



As shown in Figure 5 below, the TTS was in highest demand during the afternoon peak period between 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. accounting for 22.4% of the total ridership. The demand during this time period is largely attributed to student ridership. Ridership appears to be relatively consistent during the other hours of operation, with each hourly segment accounting for between six and eight percent of total ridership.

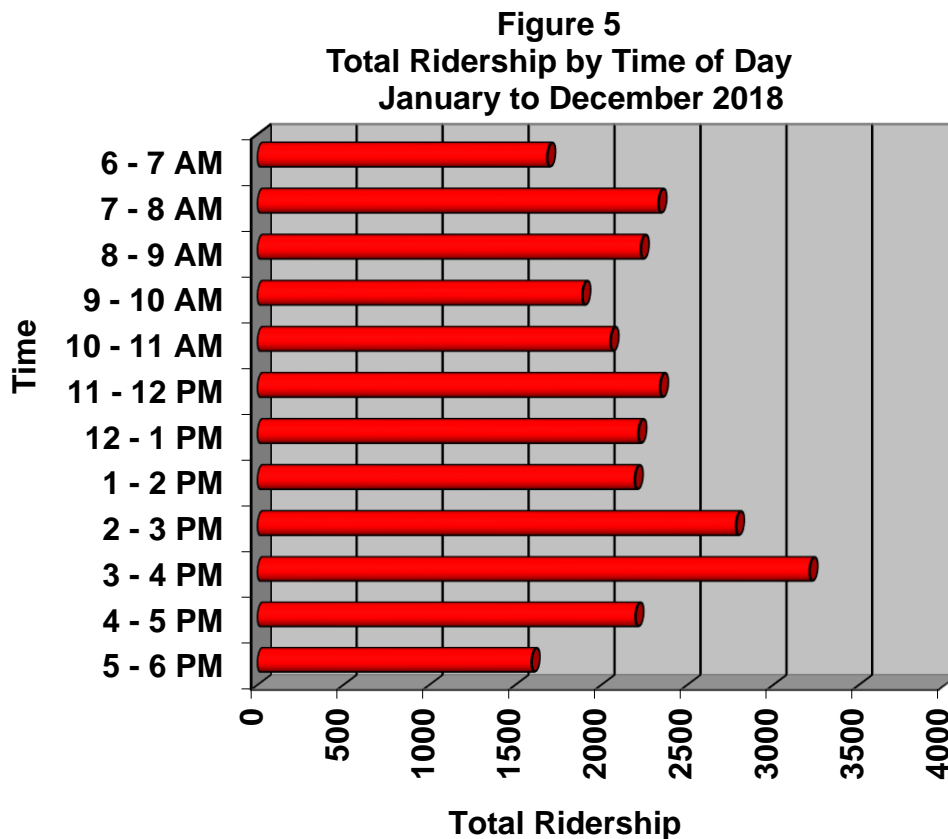
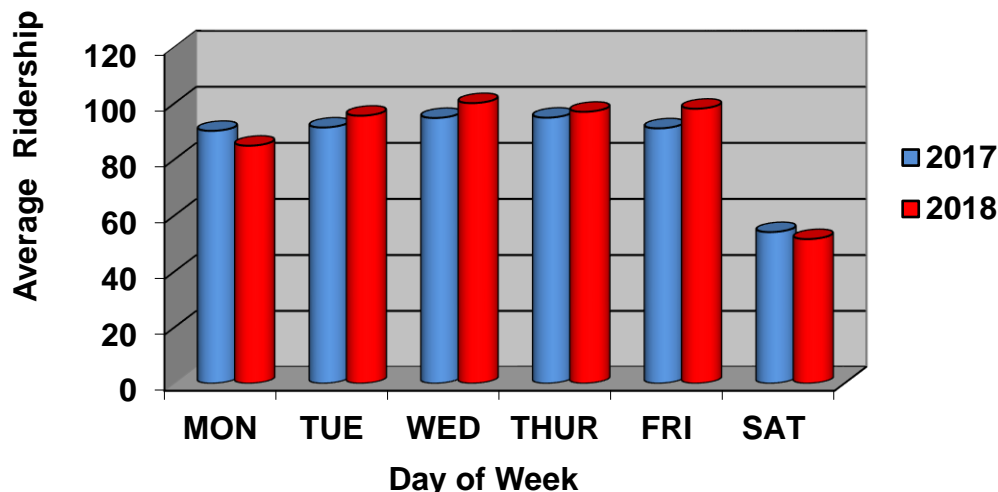


Figure 6 below illustrates that, with the exception of Saturday, there does not seem to be any significant difference amongst the days of the week on which people are using the transit system. Lower ridership on Saturdays can be attributed to fewer students using the service on this day and fewer places of employment being open.

Figure 6
Average Daily Ridership by Day of the Week
2017 and 2018



Ridership Revenue Analysis

Figure 7 depicts total annual fare box revenues generated by the TTS from 2010 to 2018. Annual revenues have decreased from the totals experienced from 2012-2017. The 2018 total annual fare box revenues were \$19,797 (compared to \$22,794 for 2017) representing a 13.1% decrease in fare revenue over the previous year. Part of this decrease in fare box revenue was a result of the increase in the sales of monthly bus passes. A total of \$4,205 was generated through the sale of bus passes in 2018 (compared to \$2,655 for 2017) bringing total revenues generated for 2018 to \$24,002 (compared to \$25,449 for 2017) amounting to a 4.6% decrease in total overall annual revenues for 2018.

Figure 7
Annual Revenues
2010 to 2018

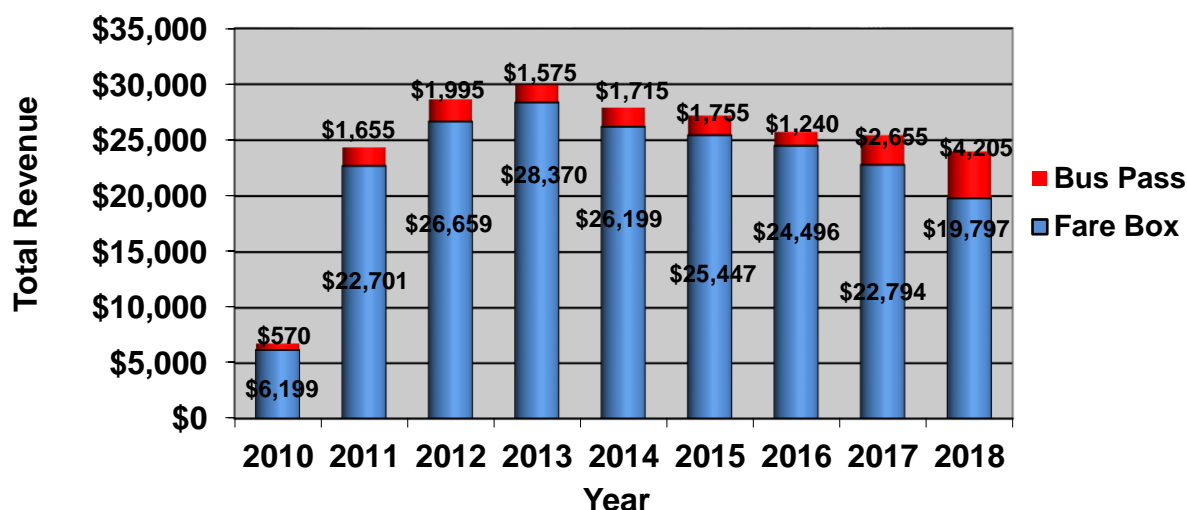
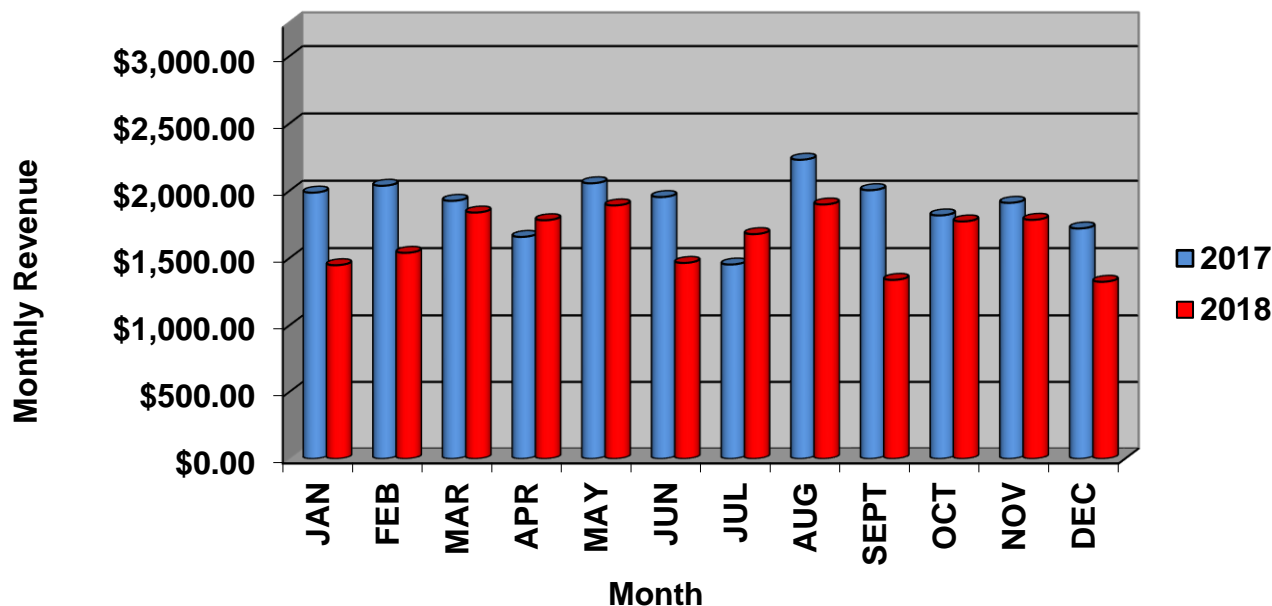


Figure 8 depicts a comparison of monthly total fare box revenues generated by the TTS for 2017 and 2018. The highest total monthly revenue for 2017 (\$1,902) occurred in August. It should be noted that the total for this month included an estimated \$115 generated from the Corn Festival Shuttle Service.

Figure 8
Total Monthly Fare Box Revenues
2017 and 2018



Two general boarding options exist for passengers using the bus: cash fare and non-cash fare payment. Non-cash fare includes the following categories:

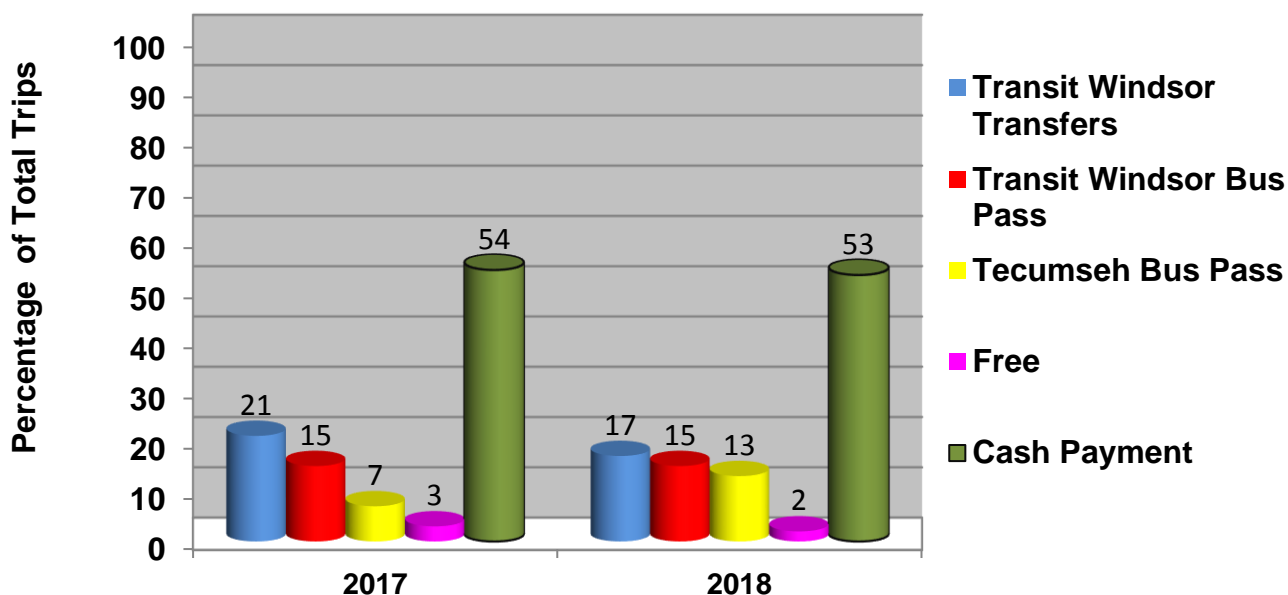
- Transit Windsor transfer (at Tecumseh Mall only);
- Transit Windsor bus pass (at Tecumseh Mall only);
- Tecumseh Transit bus pass; or
- free riders (i.e. child under the age of five, blind persons, veterans and persons assisting a person with a disability)

Figure 9 below identifies the distribution of passengers based on category of fare payment. For 2018, Transit Windsor transfers accounted for 36% of all non-cash fare trips (compared to 45% in 2017) and 17% of total trips (compared to 21% in 2017). These trips are primarily Tecumseh residents who pay an outbound fare (to Tecumseh Mall), continue into Windsor by using the Transit Windsor system, then return to Tecumseh by using the aforementioned transfer stub.

In 2018, riders using a Transit Windsor bus pass when boarding the bus at Tecumseh Mall accounted for 32% of all non-cash fare trips (compared to 33% in 2017) and 15% of total trips

(same as in 2017). These users are those who board the bus at Tecumseh Mall from the Transit Windsor system and take the bus into Tecumseh. These riders then pay the required fare when returning to Tecumseh Mall on the outbound trip back into the City of Windsor.

Figure 9
Cash and Non-Cash Fare Trips by Category
2017 and 2018



Passengers using a Tecumseh Transit bus pass, providing access to the system at any stop, accounted for 27% of all non-cash fare trips (compared to 16% in 2017) and 13% of total trips (compared to 7% in 2017). These riders have purchased a monthly bus pass at the Town Municipal Office. Free riders accounted for 2% of all trips in 2018 (compared to 3% in 2017).

The increase in Tecumseh bus pass trips can be attributed to an increase in the total numbers of bus passes sold in 2018. A total of 60 Tecumseh Transit bus passes were purchased in 2018, up from the 43 purchased in 2017. Adult and Student bus passes accounted for 46 of the 60 bus passes issued (23 each respectively), with the other 14 bus passes being senior passes. The majority of the passes (38 of 60) were purchased in one-month increments rather than the multi-month pass option. These riders are primarily Tecumseh residents and students that use the TTS on a daily basis and, in some instances, multiple times per day.

Initiatives Planned for 2019

i) Seniors Ride for Free Month

In June of 2018, the TTS offered a promotion for the Town's seniors, allowing them to ride the TTS for free for the entire month of June (Seniors' Month in Ontario). This initiative resulted in more than double the amount of seniors using the TTS. In keeping with Council's direction to better promote the service to seniors, Administration is once again recommending this program for 2019. The principle objective of this initiative will be to help seniors gain a better

understanding and appreciation for the TTS and transit in general in the hope that they would feel comfortable using the service on a regular basis.

ii) Delivery and Preparation of a Second Low Floor Accessible Transit Bus

A second low floor accessible transit bus, similar to the one purchased in 2017, was purchased in 2018 and delivery is expected in early February 2019. This bus will need to be painted with the Town's logo and transit design in the same manner as the 2017 bus. It will then be available for service in late February. The initiation of a second new low floor accessible transit bus is expected to improve service by reducing service disruptions due to mechanical issues experienced with the Town's older bus and by providing quicker boarding for those riders with accessibility needs.

iii) Fleet Management Services - GPS Units and Counters on the Buses

In accordance with the Council-approved budget for 2019, Fleet Management Services have been purchased from SkyMobile and are anticipated to be installed and operational by the end of February coinciding with the introduction of the second low floor accessible bus. These services include the installation of GPS units on the two buses thereby enabling staff to track the bus location and providing the opportunity to relay that information to the ridership through the Town's website. This service also includes electronic counters that will enable the bus drivers to more easily track riders boarding and departing the bus. These counters will significantly reduce the time and effort by staff involved in tabulating and reporting the requisite transit statistics to the Ministry of Transportation and the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA).

iv) Advertising Panels on New Bus

This initiative was planned for 2018 but due to the time delays in the delivery of the second bus, it was decided that it would be more appropriate to defer its implementation until 2019. With a single-route system that runs one bus at a time, but alternates two buses, it is important that both buses contain the same advertising panels to deliver this service effectively. Currently, one of the two buses is covered in a wrap, which undermines the ability to place advertising on it. The recently purchased transit bus, however, has an advertising panel on each side in the identical locations and sizes of the current newer low floor accessible bus.

A survey of other transit systems throughout Ontario suggests that the rate for this size of advertising panel ranges from \$120 to \$150 per month. It is believed that given the significant exposure of the TTS, particularly along Tecumseh Road and at Tecumseh Mall, the TTS could charge the upper limit of this range. This rate would generate approximately \$300 per month for the TTS. If the two external advertising panels prove successful, there is the potential to add another advertising panel to the passenger side of both buses. An advertising agreement, based on the one currently used by the arena for rink-board advertising, will be developed for the TTS.

v) Continued Dialogue with Transit Windsor Regarding Cross Boundary Service Opportunities

In accordance with the direction of Council, Administration recently met with Transit Windsor representatives to discuss the current transfer policy between the two systems. Currently, the Town accepts transfers from the Transit Windsor system but this courtesy is not extended to TTS riders when they board the Transit Windsor system at Tecumseh Mall. Although there was no commitment from the Transit Windsor representatives to provide free transfers from the TTS to the Transit Windsor service, information on the TTS ridership levels was provided and they agreed to review it.

The meeting also provided the opportunity to have a broader discussion regarding potential areas of mutual interest related to the two transit systems. The meeting was timely as it the City is currently undertaking a review of its transit function through the “More than Transit” initiative – one of the goals of which is to “look at how to better connect people to school, work, services, and more”. Accordingly, discussions also took place regarding other opportunities including the possibility of introducing a pilot program to extend the current Transit Windsor route servicing the Oldcastle Hamlet to cover a greater area. It was agreed that further discussions with respect to this initiative will need to take place.

Summary

After three years of diminishing ridership, the TTS ridership levels for 2018 increased marginally over the 2017 levels. This increase may be attributed to route revisions implemented in mid-2018 to make the service more reliable and the purchase of new, kneeling buses to improve accessibility, safety and comfort for the ridership. The kneeling bus also provided for more efficient loading of wheelchair riders as it negates the need for the external lowering of a ramp on the rear of the older bus, which takes more time. It is believed that these improvements, along with a promotional effort targeted at seniors assisted with increasing ridership numbers while providing a more effective and reliable transit service.

The introduction of the second kneeling bus, anticipated to be in operation by late-February, and the addition of GPS units on the buses will further assist with service enhancements and reliability for 2019.

Consultations

Information & Communication Services
First Student Canada

Financial Implications

None

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2017-18 Strategic Priorities
<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 the Town of 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 the Town 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:

Enrico DeCecco, BA (Hons), MCIP, RPP
Junior Planner

Reviewed by:

Chad Jeffery, MA, MCIP, RPP
Manager Planning Services

Reviewed by:

Brian Hillman, MA, MCIP, RPP
Director Planning & Building Services

Recommended by:

Tony Haddad, MSA, CMO, CPFA
Chief Administrative Officer

**Attachment
Number**

**Attachment
Name**

1

2018 Ridership Totals by Bus Stop Map

