

C2020-0384: Calgary Transit Response to AISH and Income Support Payment Date Change

Combined Meeting of Council
2020 March 16



Background

- Government of Alberta provides Assured Income for the severely handicapped and other individuals and families
 - “Income Support can help you and your family with basic living costs and other necessities. Depending on your needs and situation you may be eligible to receive assistance through Alberta’s Income Support program.”
 - Government of Alberta announced on 2020 January 28 that payment dates would change.
 - “Starting March 2020, the monthly payment date for Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) and Income Support (IS) is changing to the first of the month to provide more consistency”
- <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-income-support.aspx>

Background

- Previously, the payment date was a few days before the beginning of the month, with the actual date of payment varying from month-to-month.
- Starting 2020 March, the monthly payment date for Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) and Income Support (IS) has changed to the first of the month.
- When the first of the month is a holiday or weekend, benefits will be paid on the last business day of the previous month. For example, March 1, 2020 fell on a Sunday, so the direct deposit and mailing date occurred on Friday, February 28, 2020.

Implications for Calgary Transit Customers

- 12,400 customers rely on AISH, primarily in LITP Band B
- 14,200 customers rely on Income Support, primarily in LITP Band A
- Change in payment date impacts their ability to purchase a monthly pass
- Customers are willing to wait in lines at Customer Service Centres in order to align pass purchases with benefit payment dates

Band	Pass Price	LICO Range	Per cent Discount off adult pass	2019 Pass Sales (Qty)	% of Total 2019 Pass Sales
A	\$5.45	0-50% LICO	95%	311,138	65%
B	\$38.15	50%-85% LICO	65%	148,858	31%
C	\$54.50	85-100% LICO	50%	21,173	4%

Calgary Transit Response in 2020 March

- Fair Entry and Calgary Transit coordinated messaging with the Government of Alberta
- The City anticipated customer demand and responded by opening an additional sales location to relieve demand on the first weekend (Feb 28-Mar 1) at a cost of approximately \$5,000

	Customers Served	
	2019	2020
Saturday	145	1,128
Sunday	105	1,233
Total Weekend	250	2,361

Considerations Moving Forward

- Core issue: some customers might not be able to afford to purchase a monthly pass until they receive their benefit payment
- Some citizens will view the response to the Government of Alberta's change as The City's responsibility
- The City's desire is to address obstacles that prevent citizens from using Calgary Transit
- At the same time, The City needs to continue to focus on:
 - Customer Commitment
 - Fair Entry Principles
 - Revenue Protection
- Concerns about lineups are heightened with current COVID-19 situation
- Options for response were evaluated on the basis of these focus areas

1. March 2020 LITP would be valid for April 2020 as well.
2. Enhance communications with LITP clients to purchase May passes early:
 - Focus on online sales, available from 6th of previous month
 - Explore increased debit options for online sales
 - Help spread out lineups through early in-person sales starting 15th of previous month

Implications:

- No bylaw amendments are required to make this adjustment
- Loss of LITP revenue for one month
- Similar appearance of LITP and regular Adult/Youth Monthly Passes will cause confusion with Operators – internal communications required for mitigation

That Council direct Administration to:

1. Extend the valid period for the March 2020 Calgary Transit Low Income Transit Pass to include April 2020.
2. Enhance communications and opportunities for Low Income Transit Pass users to purchase subsequent monthly passes early and through online methods.

C2020-0384: Calgary Transit Response to AISH and Income Support Payment Date Change

Combined Meeting of Council
2020 March 16

