

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**TO:**            *MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE TRANSIT INCENTIVE PROGRAM**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** staff be authorized to revise the Employee Transit Incentive Program effective January 1, 2024, as outlined in section 4.0 of the report titled “Employee Transit Incentive Program” dated October 17, 2023; and

**THAT** a copy of the report be forwarded to the Environment Committee.

**REPORT**

The Financial Management Committee, at its meeting held on October 17, 2023, received and adopted the attached report seeking Council approval to revise the Employee Transit Program.

On behalf of the Financial Management  
Committee,

Councillor S. Dhaliwal  
Chair

Councillor A. Gu  
Vice Chair

**TO:** FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (FMC)  
**FROM:** CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER  
**SUBJECT:** **EMPLOYEE TRANSIT INCENTIVE PROGRAM**  
**PURPOSE:** To propose revisions to the Employee Transit Incentive Program

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** staff be authorized to revise the Employee Transit Incentive Program effective January 1, 2024, as outlined in section 4.0 of the report titled “Employee Transit Incentive Program” dated October 17, 2023; and

**THAT** a copy of the report be forwarded to the Environment Committee.

## **1.0 POLICY SECTION**

The Employee Transit Incentive Program aligns with the City’s Climate Action Framework (2020), declaration of a Climate Emergency (2019), Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016), Corporate Strategic Plan and the Burnaby Promise (2022).

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

In 1991 October, the City introduced an Employee Transit Incentive Program to encourage employees to use public transit and encourage Healthy Active Living, reduce the impact on the environment from vehicle emissions and assist in addressing parking space congestion at the City Hall. The eligibility criteria and amount of this incentive have changed several times over the last thirty-two years.

Progressive Council-endorsed changes in eligibility (2016, 2018, 2020) in the Employee Transit Incentive Program saw an increase in value of incentives paid through the program, year-over-year, of between 18-32% from 2017 through 2019. In 2019, the City declared a climate emergency and set ambitious targets to reduce corporate and city-wide greenhouse gas emissions in the coming decades, ultimately to reach carbon neutrality.

In late 2022, CUPE 23 requested that the City of Burnaby increase the Employee Transit Incentive. This report provides an update on Incentive Program enrollment and cost and recommends an increase in the size of the Employee Transit Incentive from 25% to 40% for monthly passes.

The purpose of this report is to propose a revision in the Employee Transit Incentive Program from 25% to 40%, as described in section 4.0 of this October 16, 2023.

The global COVID-19 pandemic and increases in employees working from home in 2020 significantly decreased both regional transit ridership and the value of incentives paid through the City’s Incentive Program. There have been slow but steady increases in regional transit ridership and in the City’s Employee Transit Incentive Program in 2021 and 2022. The proposed increase to the Employee Transit Incentive Program from 25% to 40% is intended to increase ridership and support the City of Burnaby’s Policies and Strategies.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Incentive Paid	\$18,108	\$23,876	\$13,738	\$13,812	\$15,186
Incentive Paid Increase	+20%	+32%	-42%	+0.5%	+10%

\*Substantial decrease due to COVID-19 global pandemic.  
 \*\*This incentive paid value reflects the current incentives paid to-date, for 11 of 12 months of 2022.

**3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

**3.1. City of Burnaby Employee Transit Incentive Program**

The current Employee Transit Incentive Program is based on the following criteria:

- Scope: Full-time and part-time employees.
  
- Eligibility Threshold: Staff working an average of 10 hours per week over the last month prior to the purchase of the monthly pass.
  
- Incentive Amount: A 25% incentive is applicable to the purchase of a Monthly TransLink Pass:

- Payroll adds the 25% incentive amount to the employees bi-weekly payroll cheque as reimbursement as this is a taxable benefit to the employee;
- Proof of purchase of a Monthly TransLink Pass is provided to Payroll by the employee (only one pass per employee is discounted each month); and,
- Employees agree not to transfer the Monthly TransLink Pass to a third party for use.

The Chief Administrative Officer’s Office has an annual budget provision of \$38,000 within the People & Culture Department for the Employee Transit Incentive Program. The following table reflects the costs related to the program over the past four years.

As previously noted, there was a marked decline (42% between 2019 and 2020) in the costs related to the program between 2019 and 2020, primarily due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. The pandemic both decreased the frequency with which employees were commuting into the office in the first place, and decreased use of public transit as a primary mode of transportation in the region.

**3.2 Metro Vancouver Municipal Transit Incentives**

Based on the Eligibility Requirements for the City of Burnaby Employee Transit Incentive Program of a minimum of 10 hours worked per week in the past month, the City had the following eligible employees and employee enrollment for this program:

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Employees Eligible for the Incentive (working >=10 hours per week in the previous month)	2727	2700	2746	2867
Employee participation (actual)	136	110	82	99
Employee participation (%)	5%	4%	3%	3%

**4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Not applicable.

**5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The Chief Administrative Officer’s Office has a budget provision of \$38,000 for the Employee Transit Incentive Program in 2023, which will sustain the recommended increase.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Bhandari, Chief Human Resources Officer

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1 – Comparison of commuting emissions
- Attachment 2 – Comparison of Municipal Transit Incentives

**REPORT CONTRIBUTORS**

This report was prepared by Erica Lay, Manager, Climate Action & Energy and Sergio Picco Senior Manager, Occupational Health & Safety, and reviewed by Anita Bhandari, Chief Human Resources Officer.

Table 1. Comparison of commuting emissions per average passenger/driver trip in Metro Vancouver.  
 Source: Translink Climate Action Strategy <https://view.publitas.com/translink/translink-climate-action-strategy/page/24-25>

## How we travel has an impact on our carbon footprint

Our individual choices add up to a regional and global impact.

### GHGs (kg CO<sub>2</sub>e) PER AVERAGE PASSENGER/DRIVER TRIP IN METRO VANCOUVER



Sources:

2018 B.C. Methodological Guidance for Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy.  
 2020 TransLink, BCRTC and CMBC Internal Energy Consumption Passenger KM Reports.  
 TransLink 2017 Trip Diary.  
 Approved Carbon Intensities – Current. Information Bulletin RLCF-012. Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation. 2021.

Table 1. Comparison of Municipal Transit Incentives in the Metro Vancouver Regional District

Municipality	Transit Subsidy Amount	Approximate Staffing Levels
<b>Burnaby (proposed)</b>	40%	4264
<b>New Westminster</b>	50%	1230
<b>Surrey</b>	30%	5000
<b>Burnaby (existing)</b>	25%	4264
<b>City of North Vancouver</b>	25%	700
<b>Delta</b>	25%	1460
<b>Vancouver</b>	20%	8000
<b>Metro Vancouver</b>	20%	2500

**Cities with No Incentive:** Coquitlam, Township of Langley, Maple Ridge, District of North Vancouver, Pitt Meadows, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Richmond, West Vancouver, White Rock