

City of Mississauga
Corporate Report



<p>Date: March 7, 2023</p> <p>To: Chair and Members of General Committee</p>	<p>Originator's files:</p>
<p>From: Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services</p>	<p>Meeting date: March 29, 2023</p>

Subject

2023 Sauga Summer Pass for Youth

Recommendation

That the expansion of the age eligibility and access to services for the Sauga Summer Pass (SSP) program be approved, as outlined in the Corporate Report entitled "2023 Sauga Summer Pass for Youth" dated March 7, 2023 from the Commissioner of Community Services.

Executive Summary

- The Sauga Summer Pass (SSP), formerly called the Freedom Pass, was established in 2014. The program allowed for youth ages 12 to 14 to access free rides on MiWay in Mississauga and free participation in public swims at all City indoor and outdoor pools during July and August.
- The program was capped at 10,000 youth to manage capacity on MiWay and in swim programs.
- To date, the revenue impact of the pass program on the City was minimal as it operated on the assumption that there is some unused capacity during the summer months on MiWay and within public swim offerings, and that the majority of pass holders would not have participated unless these services were free.
- Council requested that staff consider opportunities to expand the age eligibility for this program and offer additional free recreational services for 2023.
- Based on a review of MiWay youth riders and recreational programs available for youth, it is proposed that the age eligibility for the SSP be expanded from ages 12 to 14 to youth ages 12 to 16. Further that an additional benefit be included in the 2023 program allowing free access to fitness centres for youth ages 14 to 16 (due to safety requirements, participants must be 14 years of age to access the fitness centre independently).
- A comprehensive communications campaign led by Recreation will be developed to encourage participation and support the use of the SSP to travel on MiWay and access

community centres and other youth amenities across the City.

- The increase in age eligibility for youth up to age 16, as well as the additional benefit of fitness centre access for youth ages 14 to 16, can be provided with minimal financial impact on the Recreation operating budget.
- This change would have unbudgeted material impacts on MiWay's 2023 revenue budget as Youth (13 to 16) are regular, fare-paying customers. MiWay revenue staff estimate the potential revenue shortfall could be as much as \$360,000 if youth ages 15 to 16, who ride MiWay regularly during the summer, obtain 25% of the available 10,000 passes. This represents (0.4%) of MiWay's revenue budget for 2023.
- Opportunities for sponsorship and other supporting partnerships will be explored to support future implementation and sustainability of this Youth program.

Background

MiWay partnered with the Recreation Division in 2014 to launch the Freedom Pass, which allowed youth ages 12 to 14 to access free recreation programming and free transit during the months of July and August. The program was capped at 10,000 passes, which adequately met demand. The program has run continuously since then with the exception of summer 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The target audience of youth 12 to 14 was attractive for transit as this is when independent travel on the transit system typically starts. It provides an easy opportunity to introduce new youth and their parents to riding MiWay prior to secondary school. Youth are a key ridership component for the City making up 14% of riders. The average pass resulted in 10 additional trips over the course of the summer and the revenue impacts were minimal as we estimate the majority of these trips would not have occurred unless they were free. In summer 2022, the average Sauga Summer Pass (SSP) generated eight trips on MiWay.

Close to 40,000 youth have benefitted from this program since its inception. Recreation had the highest number of swim scans in 2018 through the program with a total of 17,950. There has been value for youth by offering these free services and historically there has been minimal revenue impact to the City. It operated on the assumption that there is some unused capacity in existing transit and public swim services during the summer months and that the majority of pass holders would not have participated unless these services were free. Pass holders access these existing services on a first-come, first-served basis within established service levels.

The program restarted in 2022 and was rebranded to the Sauga Summer Pass with the same level of service as in previous years; however, fewer passes were issued in 2022: 3,226 in total, compared to 7,008 in 2019 (pre-COVID).

The chart below summarizes the status of this program:

Year	Program Fill Rate (Total Annual Capacity of 10,000)	Total Passes Issued to Youth Ages 12-14	Total Swim Scans attributed to pass holders during July & August	Average # of swim scans per pass holder during July & August	Estimated Average # of MiWay trips per pass holder during July & August
2018	82.4%	8,242	17,950	2.17	10
2019	71.8%	7,181	16,380	2.28	10
2020 & 2021	Program did not operate due to COVID-19 restrictions				
2022	32.2%	3228	9402	2.91	8

Comments

Council requested that staff consider opportunities to expand the age eligibility for this program and offer additional free services in future years.

The City of Mississauga is committed to being a youth-friendly City that provides programs and services that keep youth active, healthy and connected to their communities. This commitment is needed today more than ever as youth and the City as a whole continue to navigate through the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their physical, mental and economic well-being. For example, the 2022 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth reported that only 28% of Canadian children and youth are meeting the recommended minimum of 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Staff recommend that the SSP continue to be offered to Mississauga youth in 2023 with a program capacity of 10,000 and with the following changes for consideration:

Expand age eligibility of the program to be inclusive of youth ages 12 to 16

It is proposed that the eligibility criteria for the Sauga Summer Pass be extended from youth ages 12 to 14 to youth ages 12 to 16 in 2023 following direction from the previous Council. This change to the age eligibility will have minimal impacts to the Recreation budget and provide additional incentive and opportunities for youth to access recreation and fitness programs.

For MiWay, this change will have material impacts on MiWay's 2023 revenue budget as youth (ages 13 to 19) are regular, fare-paying customers on MiWay with the average user taking transit 31 times per month during July and August. Many youth ages 15 to 16 are regular riders as they often take transit for school or recreational purposes and free transit for the summer will be very attractive. As Sauga Summer Passes are granted on a first-come, first-served basis in

May, there is the potential that a significant number of regular youth riders could apply seeking free transit.

Beginning May 1, 2023, the same date that the annual SSP application process opens, MiWay will begin piloting a new youth 12 and under ride free program for one year. With this, we would anticipate that only 12 year olds with an interest in recreation activities would apply for the SSP.

Add an additional program benefit of free access to City weight room facilities

The Recreation Division operates seven (7) fitness centres across the City with capacity to add additional users to the weight rooms during July and August. A paid youth fitness membership is required to access the fitness centre. Currently less than 8% of current fitness memberships and scans during the months of July and August are attributed to youth members. Adding fitness centre access as a benefit to the SSP will expose more youth to the City's fitness amenities and encourage ongoing use. In order to address safety considerations related to weight room access for youth, there would be a marginal increase to the operating costs for the program to offer training/orientation sessions as a condition of access. If there is a significant uptake of this benefit, there may also be staffing costs for increased supervision of the weight rooms for peak times. These costs can be accommodated within the existing Recreation operating budget. As youth must be at least 14 years old to access the fitness centre without adult supervision, this benefit would not be accessible to all SSP participants.

Implement a comprehensive communications campaign

The SSP not only provides the means to access free recreational programs and a way to get there, it also provides the means for youth to access the City's extensive outdoor park amenities (including multi-sport courts, parks, and trails), as well the City's libraries, cultural facilities and events offered throughout the community. A comprehensive communications campaign led by Recreation will be implemented to enhance awareness about these opportunities among youth to encourage participation and use of the SSP throughout the summer.

Strategic Plan

The SSP aligns with the Youth Plan for Recreation, the Transportation Master Plan, and the Move and Belong pillars of the City's Strategic Plan.

Financial Impact

The overall program capacity of the SSP will be maintained at 10,000 spaces. Pass holders will have access to the eligible services on a first-come, first-served basis based on existing service levels. The increase in age eligibility to be inclusive of youth ages 12 to 16, as well as the

additional benefit of fitness centre access, can be accommodated with minimal financial impact on the Recreation operating budget.

The Sauga Summer Pass is a flash pass so MiWay cannot collect individual ridership profiles; however, Youth Presto data is well established and reliable. MiWay revenue staff have estimated the potential revenue shortfall could be as much as \$360,000 should youth ages 15 to 16 who are regular MiWay riders during the summer obtain 25% of the available 10,000 passes. This represents (0.4%) of MiWay's revenue budget for 2023. This amount has not been provided for within MiWay's approved operating budget.

Opportunities for sponsorship and other supporting partnerships will be explored to support future implementation and sustainability of this initiative.

Conclusion

The SSP supports positive development for Mississauga youth by supporting their growing need for independence and overall health and well-being. It provides an opportunity for youth to explore the City and to familiarize themselves with the City's recreation and transit services and become future customers.



Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services

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