

The revenue lost if council approves free transit for children aged 12 and under would be approximately \$2,000 per year. That number jumps to \$2 million per year if the age is extended to 18, according to administration.

- Leader Post – Thursday, April 28, 2022

Dear Mayor & Council,

This portrayal of the transit system in the Leader Post and the results of moving to a free transit system for children 18 years and younger is somewhat misleading and has been used by many people as a reason or rationale to not change.

Let's work through a scenario to explain this. We have a 13-year-old child that is riding the public transit system. Currently, 37% of their fare is paid for by their parents, taxpayers in the city. The other 63% is paid for by the remaining taxpayers in the city through the city budget that is approved every year. So parents and taxpayers cover the entire fare.

Under the proposed new funding proposal, we will have the 13-year-old's fare paid for entirely by the taxpayers of this city. So, in one case, the fare is paid for by a taxpaying parent and the rest of the taxpayers. The second option is the fare is paid for by all taxpayers. There is no lost revenue. It simply shows up on a different line. And taxpayers are paying for the entire fare, whether individually or collectively either way.

This type of red herring or distraction was also used when it was earlier proposed that those on social assistance should get a reduced rate transit pass. They said at the time that this is lost revenue. Those individuals most likely would not be riding the bus and would most likely not get any benefits of the transit system. Secondly, the costs to the taxpayer would not be going up because having one more person on a bus that holds 40 passengers that had 20 people there is negligible or near zero.

And yet, in both cases the benefits to the community are substantial. In the case of the 13-year-old, that is potentially one less automobile on the road and potentially another resident in Regina that may not purchase an automobile in their lifetime.

And if they eventually do, it is more likely to be electric. Extrapolate that to the entire youth population in Regina, that could, based on 2021 census data, take 98,260 vehicles off the road or nearly half (43.4%) of what is out there. As I stated before many will purchase electric vehicles. If only those 10-19 don't purchase a vehicle, that is 10.1% of the city's population that will take the public transit system or half of what is being proposed in the Transit Master Plan over the next 18 years.

As was stated by the student from Miller High School, many of those high school-aged children want to do something on the climate crisis. You have the potential to put them on that best path. Are they going to be disappointed again and again by adults when you only go halfway?

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Elliott