

# Memorandum

## City of Lawrence

### Public Transit

**TO: Diane Stoddard, Interim City Manager**

**FROM: Robert Nugent, Transit Administrator**

**CC: Casey Toomay, Assistant City Manager**

**Date: June 12, 2015**

**RE: Contribution Policy and Request for Passes for Summer Food Program**

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Please place the following item on the City Commission agenda:

**Background:**

In 2004 Lawrence Transit implemented a Contribution of Alternate Fares Policy (see attached). The goal of this policy was to fulfill outside requests for transit fares and remove the need for staff discretion in evaluating those requests. The policy makes available a total community, annual contribution of 1% of the total revenue from the previous year's fare box and pass sales.

Staff has used this policy since 2004 to administer requests for contributions. The majority of the requests over the last few years has been small in nature and primarily associated with families needing assistance with transportation of school age children. So far in 2015 we have not provided any contributions to any agency or organization.

Until 2013 the City had also provided \$8,000 a year to the Lawrence Community Shelter (LCS) in order to have LCS allocate funds to various homeless service agencies (including LCS) for bus passes and work clothing for homeless individuals. These funds were provided under the city's general budget. As a result of the relocation of LCS and the additional costs associated with the new location Commission approved an additional \$7,800 for bus passes in the 2013 budget. Commission also approved the provision of \$15,600 annually for single-ride tickets to LCS starting in 2014. This decision also transitioned the expenses from the City's general budget to the Lawrence Transit budget of which local funds are provided through a dedicated sales tax.

In May 2015 staff was asked to evaluate the possibility of providing Summer Bus passes in support of the Summer Food Program. The Summer Food Program is free to any of the 15,800+ youth in Lawrence between the ages of 1-18. In March of 2015, the USD 497 Food Service had 4,500+ students (K-12) eligible for the free and reduced lunch program. In 2014, a maximum of 1,250 youth were served lunch during the Lawrence Summer Food Program on the highest-volume day. This year, on the first day of the Summer Food Program, 976 lunches were served and has continued to increase.

Staff reviewed the request and provided a response which included two possible options. The first option was through the use of the Summer Bus pass and the second option was through the use of standard single-ride tickets. Staff also raised questions about the size of the request and whether the request was for a contribution or if an agency would be purchasing the passes or tickets.

Staff also presented the request to the Public Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC) for review. PTAC was supportive of the program but was not supportive of contributing passes or tickets for free. It was their opinion that it would set a bad precedent and would be unfair to agencies that are, and have been, purchasing passes on a regular basis. As an example, combined in 2014 the following agencies purchased over \$49K of passes and tickets to assist their clients with their transportation needs:

- 100 Good Women
- Bert Nash
- Board of Realtors
- Catholic Charities
- Cottonwood
- DCAP
- DCCCA, Inc.
- DCF
- DG County Corrections
- DG County Probation
- DG County Sheriff
- ECKAN
- Girl Scouts
- Heartland Community Health
- Heartland RADAC
- KS Parole Office
- KVC
- Lawrence Community Shelter
- Lawrence Housing
- LMH
- Public Library
- Rehab Services
- Salvation Army
- The Shelter
- USD497
- USD497 LHS
- USD497-Ctran
- Willow DVC

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff would recommend that Commission work within the existing contribution policy guidelines. Under the guidelines the maximum amount of contributions is based on 1% of last year's fare revenues. Since the 2014 fare box revenues were \$385,568 the amount available for contribution would be \$3,855. Under the policy the maximum contribution per agency, per year would be \$771. That amounts to 77 Summer Passes or 771 single ride tickets. These tickets or passes would be made available to a single agency to distribute. If it is decided that passes would be provided Lawrence Transit will need to print additional passes. Since a reprint would be necessary the design and/or color will be changed in order to make it easy to monitor and count their use.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff seeks approval and/or guidance for the contribution of passes or tickets in association with the Lawrence Summer food Program.