



STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG

Community Services, Protection, and Economic Development Standing Committee

Report to: Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors

From: Renee Champagne, Transportation Supervisor
Lacricia Turner, Director of Community Services

Standing Committee Date: September 9, 2026

Report Number: COMM-2026-006

Council Meeting Date: September 23, 2026

Subject: **Cobourg Community Centre Youth Zone & Cobourg
Transit Initiative**

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1. Recommendation:

WHEREAS the Committee adopt the following recommendation and refer to Regular Council for final approval.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council authorize Cobourg Transit and the Cobourg Community Centre to implement a program whereby registered Youth Zone participants ages 12 to 18, may ride Cobourg Transit at no charge upon presentation of a valid Youth Zone Membership Card; and

FUTHER THAT Council direct Staff to monitor participation and transit usage associated with the program and report back to Council, as appropriate.

2. Executive Summary:

The Community Services Division recently launched Youth Zone at the Cobourg Community Centre (CCC), providing youth ages 12 to 18 with a welcoming and accessible space to participate in recreational, social, and community activities.

To further improve accessibility to the program, Staff are recommending that Cobourg Transit and the CCC work together to allow registered Youth Zone participants to ride Cobourg Transit free of charge by presenting a valid Youth Zone Membership Card.

The current Cobourg Transit fare is \$2.50 per ride. The financial impact of the initiative is expected to be minimal and will be dependent upon actual transit usage by Youth Zone participants. Not all current Youth Zone participants are expected to use Cobourg Transit, and therefore the maximum potential cost cannot be reasonably estimated without established ridership patterns.

The proposed initiative would provide youth with greater independence in accessing the CCC, reduce transportation barriers to participation, and encourage youth to become familiar with public transit.

3. Background

The Community Services Division recently launched Youth Zone at the Cobourg Community Centre (CCC), a new program that provides a welcoming space for youth ages 12 to 18 to connect, stay active, explore new interests, and have fun.

The opening of Youth Zone commenced with a soft launch throughout July and August, offering access to the space two evenings per week. Youth Zone currently has approximately 20 registered members. In September, operations expanded to Monday through Friday, with a full lineup of activities and programming offered throughout the month.

Youth are invited to drop in and participate in sports and games, connect with peers, access free Wi-Fi, and build friendships in a positive and welcoming environment. Participants have access to the gymnasium for recreational activities, as well as the Seniors Room for games, socializing, and other activities.

Youth Zone is intended to provide an accessible and positive environment where youth can participate in recreational and social activities and develop connections within their community.

Transportation access is an important consideration in supporting participation in the program. Youth who do not have access to a personal vehicle or who are unable to obtain transportation from a parent, guardian, or other individual may face barriers in accessing the CCC.

Cobourg Transit provides an existing transportation option for youth travelling to and from the CCC. Staff have identified an opportunity for Cobourg Transit and the CCC to work together to further support Youth Zone by allowing registered participants to use public transit at no cost.

There are currently approximately 20 youth registered with Youth Zone. It is not anticipated that all registered participants will use Cobourg Transit, and actual usage will depend on individual transportation needs, proximity to transit routes, and frequency of participation in Youth Zone.

4. Discussion:

Staff recommend establishing a partnership between Cobourg Transit and the Cobourg Community Centre that would allow registered Youth Zone participants between the ages of 12 and 18 to ride Cobourg Transit free of charge upon presentation of a valid Youth Zone Membership Card.

The proposed approach would provide a straightforward method for Transit operators to confirm eligibility. The CCC would issue Youth Zone Membership Cards to eligible participants and Cobourg Transit operators would recognize the card as proof that the rider is eligible for the free-fare benefit.

The initiative would not require the creation of a separate transit pass or fare media for Youth Zone participants. Instead, the existing Youth Zone Membership Card would serve as the identifier for the program.

Benefits

The proposed initiative would provide several benefits to both Youth Zone participants and the broader community:

- **Improved affordability:** Eliminates the \$2.50 transit fare as a potential barrier for youth wishing to participate in Youth Zone.
- **Greater independence:** Provides youth with an additional transportation option that does not require reliance on parents or guardians.
- **Increased participation:** May allow additional youth to access the CCC and participate in recreation, sports, social activities, and other Youth Zone opportunities.
- **Transit awareness:** Introduces youth to Cobourg Transit and encourages familiarity with public transit as a transportation option.
- **Community partnership:** Strengthens collaboration between Community Services and Cobourg Transit in delivering accessible community programs.
- **Youth engagement:** Supports the Town's efforts to provide positive recreational and social opportunities for local youth.

Program Administration

If Council approves the initiative, staff from the CCC and Cobourg Transit would establish operational procedures prior to implementation.

These procedures would address matters such as:

- Implementation of a valid Youth Zone Membership Card;
- Confirmation that the cardholder is a current Youth Zone participant;
- Communication of the program to Transit operators;
- Procedures for expired, lost, or cancelled membership cards;
- Monitoring of participation and transit usage.

The proposed benefit would apply to eligible Youth Zone participants while their membership remains valid. Staff would also have the ability to review the program after implementation and make operational adjustments as required.

Monitoring

As this is a new initiative, there is currently insufficient information to accurately predict the number of Youth Zone participants who will use Cobourg Transit or the frequency with which they will do so.

Staff recommend monitoring the initiative following implementation. Where practical, transit usage associated with Youth Zone participants can be tracked to assist with evaluating the program's effectiveness and financial impact.

A review could be undertaken after the first year of implementation to determine participation levels, transit usage, and whether the program should continue, be modified, or be expanded.

5. Financial Impact and Budget

The current cost of riding Cobourg Transit is \$2.50 per ride.

There are currently approximately 20 youth registered for Youth Zone. It is not anticipated that all Youth Zone participants will use Cobourg Transit, and the frequency of transit use will vary based on individual transportation needs and participation in Youth Zone activities.

As a result, the financial impact of the proposed initiative cannot be accurately projected at this time. The cost to the Town would be directly related to the number of trips taken by eligible Youth Zone participants that would otherwise have generated a fare.

Given the current enrollment of approximately 20 Youth Zone participants and the uncertainty regarding transit usage, staff anticipate that the financial impact of

the initiative will be minimal. Any foregone fare revenue would be accommodated within the existing Cobourg Transit operating budget, subject to actual ridership.

Staff recommend that transit usage associated with the program be monitored following implementation so that the actual financial impact can be assessed. This information can be included in the review of the program following its initial implementation period.

6. Relationship to Council's Strategic Plan Priorities 2023 to 2027 and beyond:

☐ Thriving Community

☒ Service Excellence

The proposed partnership between Cobourg Transit and the Cobourg Community Centre supports the Town's commitment to Service Excellence by improving access to municipal services and recreational opportunities for youth. Allowing eligible Youth Zone participants to use Cobourg Transit at no cost provides an accessible and customer-focused transportation option and reduces barriers to participation in a Town-operated community program.

☒ Sustainability

The initiative also supports Sustainability by encouraging the use of public transit among youth and promoting transit as an accessible transportation option. Introducing young residents to public transit at an early age can help build familiarity with and confidence in sustainable transportation options, while supporting the efficient use of the Town's existing transit service.

7. Public Engagement:

N/A

8. Attachments:

None.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	CCC Youth Zone and Cobourg Transit Initiative.docx
Attachments:	None.
Final Approval Date:	Sep 2, 2026

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Laurie Wills - Aug 27, 2026 - 3:20 PM

Lacricia Turner - Aug 28, 2026 - 12:01 PM

Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Sep 2, 2026 - 2:30 PM