



**Date:** August 28, 2019

**To:** Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager  
**Through:** Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager  
**From:** Bill Judge, Interim Director of Transportation  
**Subject:** Ordinance to Establish Fare-Free Day on Election Days

### **Executive Summary**

The City of Durham would like to make it easier for residents to exercise their right to vote by facilitating transportation opportunities to polling centers with a fare-free transit day on Election Day for the general election and for the general municipal election. The City Attorney's Office recommends that the approval of free fare-days requires City Council final approval.

### **Recommendation**

The City's administration recommends that the City Council adopt an Ordinance to Establish Fare-Free day on Election Days.

### **Background**

City Council has approved a fare-free day on the previous two Election days, November 7, 2017 and November 6, 2018, for Durham's public transit system. For 2019 and succeeding years, the City administration recommends an all-day, fare-free day, on paratransit and fixed route schedules for the GoDurham transportation system on the dates of the general election and the general municipal election for Durham City Council or Mayor.

The City administration estimates the cost to provide free transit service on Tuesday, November 5, 2019 would result in a \$7,500.00 reduction in fares. This estimate is based on a 12.3% increase in ridership on 2018 Election Day with just over 2,500 more rides than the average weekday ridership. An increase of 10-15% in ridership compared to a typical Tuesday is anticipated each year on Election Day. The loss of revenue is expected to increase in each subsequent year for Election Day as the overall system ridership increases.

GoDurham provides great transportation opportunities and the City of Durham's Transportation goal is to remove transportation as a barrier to voting on Election Day.

### **Alternatives**

- 1) City Council approves a re-occurring fare-free day for both general election and municipal election dates as determined by the election laws of North Carolina; or
- 2) City Council does not approve the fare-free day.

### **Issues/Analysis**

Providing fare-free day during the election would result in a loss of approximately \$7,500.00 in FY2020. Revenue loss is estimated to increase in following years as the overall system ridership increases.

**Financial Impact:**

Approximate revenue loss would be about \$7,500.00 for FY 2020 with an increase in the follow years as the overall system ridership increases.

**UBE Summary**

Not applicable.

**Attachment**

- 1) Ordinance to establish fare-free day for both general election and municipal election dates as determined by the election laws of North Carolina.