

COUNCIL MEMBER'S MOTION

B.3

3. Developing an #AllOnBoard and #RaiseARider Pilot

Submitted by: Councillor Swanson

WHEREAS

1. On Wednesday, January 16, 2019, Council voted to “endorse the #AllOnBoard Campaign” and to urge TransLink to develop a plan to provide free public transit for minors and to provide reduced-price transit based on a sliding scale using the Market Basket Measure for all low-income people;
2. The Vancouver School Board and Vancouver Park Board have also endorsed the #AllOnBoard campaign for “free transit access for children under 18 years of age” and “the proposal of reduced-price transit, based on a sliding scale using the Market Basket Measure, for all low-income people”;
3. TransLink has stated that new provincial funding “would be required to implement expanded discounts,” and the provincial government has not yet committed to funding TransLink or BC Transit to implement poverty reduction measures directly;
4. Every major urban region neighbouring Vancouver (Edmonton, Calgary, Seattle and Portland) has a discounted transit pass program based on income;
5. In 2012, United Way Calgary & Area found that youth with access to free transit passes had higher attendance and completion rates; in 2018 in Seattle, 80% of students who received a free transit pass said it improved their attendance at school;
6. The City of Victoria (December 1, 2019) and the Resort Municipality of Whistler (January 1, 2020) have introduced programs to provide free transit passes for youth, funded through increased parking revenue;
7. The City of Vancouver owns most EasyPark lots and is expecting to collect over \$63 million in on-street parking revenue in 2020, in addition to contracts with car share companies and fees from ride-hailing service providers;
8. Big Move #2 in the City of Vancouver’s Climate Emergency Response is “Safe and convenient active transportation and transit,” and research shows that making transit more accessible for youth helps raise life-long transit users;

9. The City of Vancouver has recognized and has demonstrated its commitment to residents' health and well-being. The lack of transportation is one of the most common reasons for missing medical appointments and a significant barrier to social inclusion and labour market inclusion for low-income adults and youth;
10. Transit and transportation was identified as a key theme in the March 2019 City of Vancouver Poverty Reduction Plan What We Heard: Phase 1 report:
 - People with various mobility issues [often must] take multiple trips in one day;
 - People [without] enough income at any one time to buy a longer-term pass ... are forced to pay more on a per-trip basis;
 - People who can find steady work often do not find it near social or low-income housing. This means they have to take bus trips often across multiple zones to get to and from work ... [which] significantly eats into their pay;
 - People with families have to pay for all the members of the family which makes the simplest outing very expensive;
11. The City of Vancouver Poverty Reduction Plan What We Heard: Phase 1 report also described the detrimental impacts of poverty and wealth gaps, including social isolation and being subjected to increased policing; and the Plan will be received in Summer 2020;
12. Rider strikes and protests in numerous cities have shown that movements for reduced emissions, poverty, and racism are linked; Vancouver has an opportunity to show its leadership in these areas by advocating for free and affordable transit initiatives; and
13. COVID has reduced transit ridership and free and low cost fares would be a way to incentivize a return to transit use and keep people out of polluting cars.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to seek an update from TransLink on its Fare Policy Review status, including the cost estimates and implementation considerations for free transit for youth ages 5–18 and the introduction of alternatives to fare evasion fines for those below the poverty line.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to report back to Council by Q3 with a discussion of the feasibility of a pilot project proposal to provide free transit passes for youth and a discounted or free pass for low-income residents, targeting Indigenous and racialized residents living below the poverty line, and other identified equity-seeking groups, including

partnerships with TransLink, targeted schools, community centres, academic and other partners;

FURTHER that the pilot proposal highlights opportunities and challenges of the pilot as well as its relation to the Vancouver Plan, forthcoming poverty Reduction Plan and the city's equity goals.

- C. THAT staff further explore sources of revenue for the pilot project that may include existing general revenue, or transportation specific revenue sources (parking, carshare, ride hail), potential future transportation revenue sources (transport pricing, zero emission parking) and municipal poverty reduction grant opportunities, and report back.
- D. THAT Council direct staff to explore the inclusion of an equity and affordability lens in any submissions to TransLink as part of the review and update of TransLink's Transport 2050 plan and Metro Vancouver's Climate 2050 Plan, and to reflect an equity and affordability lens in relation to the Vancouver's Transportation 2040 plan as 'action while planning' in the Vancouver Plan, and the forthcoming Poverty Reduction Strategy.

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