

## COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

### 2. Endorsing the Transit for Teens Campaign to Extend BC's Get on Board Program up to Age 18

Submitted by: Councillor Boyle

#### WHEREAS

1. Transit access is a survival lifeline to access shelter, school, support services, health care, and food security for low-income youth whose families may not have a vehicle, and the cost of a monthly transit pass for teens can be extremely challenging for working families already struggling with the high cost of living in Vancouver;
2. The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, the Centre for Family Equity (formerly known as the Single Mothers Alliance), and many others have been advocating for free transit through the "All On Board" campaign which calls for free transit for all starting with transit riders from age 0-18 in BC, a sliding scale pass for low-income adults, and an end to ticketing minors. Vancouver City Council passed a motion in support of the campaign in 2019;
3. Encouraging students to use public transit can increase their independence and participation in employment and civic life, and can also help close the equity gap and reduce poverty. Offering free transit to youth can incentivize a shift away from car travel, reduce the burden on parents or caregivers to drive their teenagers around, and build lifelong transit users;
4. In 2021 the BC NDP government made public transit free for all children 12 and under in every transit system in BC with the introduction of their new "Get on Board" program, "saving families money, increasing access to affordable transportation options and encouraging more people to use public transit.";
5. The City of Vancouver led a Reduced Fare Transit Pilot, thanks to funding from UBCM, which provided 100 participants with free one-zone TransLink Compass Card passes for six months from October 2021 to the end of March 2022. The Centre for Family Equity participated in the pilot, and report that according to the parents of youth who participated:
  - a. Transit access opened up the lives of teens and hugely impacted their ability to access school, after-school programs, volunteering, and social activities;
  - b. Teenagers had increased access to services and supports they needed, particularly for mental health supports;

- c. Parents reported that their teens' sense of inclusion, worth, and mental well-being were visibly affected by the free transit access;
  - d. The pass also increased teenagers' confidence to explore opportunities and activities in their community;
6. The City of Vancouver is committed to supporting our youth as well as addressing equity, diversity and inclusivity.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the City of Vancouver endorse the Transit for Teens Campaign to raise the age of eligibility for the Get on Board program up to age 18.

FURTHER THAT Council request that the Mayor write a letter to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Minister of Education and Child Care, the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, the Minister of Children and Family Development, and the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth, urging them to work with the provincial government to finalize and secure funding and develop a plan that will extend the Get on Board program up to age 18 in B.C.

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