

From: "Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>
To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"
Date: 1/14/2019 5:23:28 PM
Subject: FW: Letter to Mayor and Council - City of Vancouver re AllonBoard Resolution
Attachments: 20190114 Letter to Mayor and Council City of Vancouver re AllonBoard Resolution.pdf

Greetings Mayor and Council-
Please find attached a letter from the Translink CEO.
Best
Sadhu

Sadhu Aufochs Johnston | City Manager
City of Vancouver | 453 W 12th Avenue
Vancouver | BC V5Y 1V4
604.873.7627 | Sadhu.johnston@vancouver.ca
Twitter: [sadhuajohnston](https://twitter.com/sadhuajohnston)

From: Desmond, Kevin [<mailto:Kevin.Desmond@Translink.ca>]
Sent: Monday, January 14, 2019 4:14 PM
To: Johnston, Sadhu
Cc: Buda, Mike; Cross, Geoff; Chen-Kuo, Gigi
Subject: FW: Letter to Mayor and Council - City of Vancouver re AllonBoard Resolution

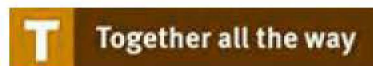
Hi Sadhu: per our conversations last week, please forward the attached letter to the mayor and City Council.

Thanks

Kevin

Kevin Desmond
Chief Executive Officer
T: 778.375.7777 | kevin.desmond@translink.ca

TransLink
South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority
400-287 Nelson Street, New Westminster, BC, V3L 0E7, Canada





TransLink
400 - 287 Nelson's Court
New Westminster, BC V3L 0E7
Canada
Tel 778-375-7500
www.translink.ca

South Coast British Columbia
Transportation Authority

January 14, 2019

Mayor and Council
City of Vancouver
City Hall
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
V5Y 1V4

Dear City of Vancouver Mayor and Council,

TransLink Considerations to Vancouver's #AllonBoard Resolution

In response to a request from Vancouver's City Manager, we want to update you on related policy work at TransLink as context for your upcoming Council discussion.

As we understand, there are two key components to the resolution being considered by council:

1. Expand TransLink's mandate to include poverty reduction. Reduce fares for low-income people and provide free fares for youth, and
 2. Eliminate fare infractions for minors and adults and eliminate enforcing collection via ICBC.
-
1. Expand TransLink's mandate to include poverty reduction. Reduce fares for low-income people and provide free fares for youth.

TransLink recognizes that transit is essential for connecting the region's most economically vulnerable to opportunities and essential services. The recent Transit Fare Review included extensive consultation with 66,000 regional residents providing input on numerous fare policy questions. Among the findings was that 58% of respondents agreed that fares should be lower for people with less ability to pay than for people with more ability to pay. However, social assistance falls under provincial jurisdiction and is not within TransLink's mandate, which is to provide an efficient transportation system that is largely self-funded.

Based on direction from the Mayors' Council in 2018, TransLink is actively working with the Province in the context of their poverty reduction mandate to identify funding opportunities and priorities. This is the first step in delivering on the 2018 recommendation of the Transit Fare Review that TransLink work with the Provincial Government to explore expanded discounts for low-income residents, children and youth.

TransLink has long offered discounts for children and youth. Young children aged 4 and under ride free. Children and youth aged 5-18 pay the Concession rate which provides a discount between 12 to 70% off the regular adult fare price. As part of its poverty reduction mandate, the provincial government funds the BC Bus Pass, a discounted annual transit pass for low-income individuals who are seniors and/or disabled.

Expanding discounts is expensive. Preliminary analysis estimates it would cost about \$35 million in foregone revenue every year to make transit free up to age 18, assuming ridership remained the same (all users would still need a valid fare media to access the system). New discounts for youth would also lead to a significant increase in youth ridership creating additional transit service requirements.

The cost to reduce the price of transit for low income people would vary depending on the degree of the discount, but preliminary analysis estimates it would cost between \$25 – \$40 million in foregone revenue every year, assuming ridership remained the same as today.

Expanding TransLink's mandate to include poverty reduction without increasing fares or reducing service would necessarily require an increase in external funding. The cost of implementing a poverty reduction mandate would have to be considered alongside other transit priorities of the Mayors' Council, including increased levels of service and infrastructure expansion.

Throughout Canada, low-income transit discounts are funded by Provincial governments or in a few cases municipalities, who have established responsibilities for providing social assistance. There is no known Canadian example of a regional transit agency bearing the cost of a discount for low-income individuals. In the U.S., cities such as Seattle, New York and San Francisco provide subsidies to the transit agency for discounted fares.

2. Eliminate fare infractions for minors and adults and eliminate enforcing collection via ICBC

TransLink receives roughly half of its transit operating revenue from fares, making fares integral to funding the operation of the transit system. Passengers are required to possess a valid proof of payment at all times; riders unable to produce valid proof of payment may receive a fare infraction notice with associated fine. This enforcement function preserves the integrity of requiring fare payment as a shared responsibility among passengers. It should be noted that the general public and TransLink customers provide frequent feedback about the need for TransLink to address fare evasion.

Eliminating fare infraction tickets for some or all riders removes a key disincentive for fare evasion, which would erode fare revenue and compromise our ability to fund ongoing investment and operations. This revenue and service erosion would have a significant negative impact, in particular on the region's most vulnerable residents. If we are successful in partnering with the province to expand discounts for children, youth and low-income individuals, there will be less financial burden and/or penalty on people who struggle to afford transit fares.

Fare enforcement officers apply discretion when writing fare infractions, handing out proportionally fewer infractions to minors than other age groups. In 2018 less than 17 tickets were referred to ICBC where the birthdate reported by the person indicated they were 18 or younger.

TransLink is mindful of extenuating circumstances, particularly of youth that are in poverty, and we are considering if and how we may be able to mitigate the negative impacts.

In addition to those steps already identified to assist low-income individuals in affording transit fares, TransLink and BC Housing have been funding a program to provide free transit tickets to social service agencies to distribute to their homeless clients. TransLink and the Mayors' Council will be assessing the effectiveness of this program and could consider expanding it in the future with financial support from Provincial funding partners.

Next steps

The Mayors' Council and TransLink Board will be considering this updated information and analysis at a meeting in the next two months, as follow up to its 2018 direction to TransLink to engage with the provincial government on these issues. The Mayors' Council is aware of the #AllonBoard resolution, with most of the issues in the resolution already raised directly with it by #AllonBoard proponents. It is expected that the Mayors' Council will follow up with #AllonBoard proponents following its meeting.

Engagement by all interested parties with the Province of BC to secure a policy, legislative and funding commitment to these issues remains the most important step to acting on this resolution.

We value Council's interest in ensuring that our transit system is affordable and accessible for all people and look forward to working together with municipal and provincial levels of government to achieve this objective. Please feel free to reach out on this topic at any time.

Yours truly,



Geoff Cross

Vice-President, Transportation Planning & Policy