



COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL
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2 November 2015

Fare Proposal,
Box 610, 520 Gorge Road East,
Victoria, B.C.,
V8W 2P3

Dear Commission Members,

We are writing this letter in response to the Fare Review process now being undertaken by the Victoria Regional Transit Commission.

The Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria (CSPC) has been coordinating the BC Transit Ticket Assistance Program (BCTTAP) since 1997. The program is an effective model of partnership between the Victoria Regional Transit Commission, BC Transit, the CSPC and 65 plus local non-profit agencies in Greater Victoria to improve access to transit for people on low income and contribute to enhanced ridership on the transit system. The tickets and monthly transit passes distributed through this program provide urgent transportation support to low income clients of local non-profit agencies in the Capital Region.

Lack of affordable transportation is one of the barriers faced by low income people in the region. Our study on usage trends of tickets and monthly passes distributed through BCTTAP shows accessing healthcare, looking for employment and attending to families' needs as the top reasons for transit use.

We are therefore concerned about the proposed increase in the monthly seniors and youth passes, and the youth pass purchased in advance, in all of the options being proposed. These passes are a vital means of accessing transit at a relatively affordable rate for these two age groups. Action Plans on Poverty at the community and regional level across Canada identify reduced cost passes for people on low income amongst these populations as being critical to their access to health services, education, training and employment. Our analysis, as the region's Social Planning Council, of affordability challenges suggest that seniors and youth are particularly vulnerable from price rises in housing, transportation and food, and that there has been a 9% decrease in average real income for residents of the Capital Region over the last seven years, disproportionately impacting these two demographic groups.

216-852 FORT STREET, VICTORIA, BC V8W 1H8
www.CommunityCouncil.ca | Tel: 250-383-6166 | admin@CommunityCouncil.ca
Twitter: @CSPC_Victoria | Facebook: CommunitySocialPlanningCouncilVictoria
Registered Charity #106961683RR0001

We recognize and acknowledge the unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples and thank the Nations for the opportunity to live and work within their traditional territories.

We would urge the Commission to consider other options based on best practices in other regions (e.g. Calgary) to include access to affordable transit as a component of community efforts to reduce and prevent poverty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rupert E. Downing". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Rupert Downing,
Executive Director,
Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria