

October 1, 2019

Dear Mayor John Tory and Toronto City Councillors,

We are writing to express our support for item MM10.7 "Exploring Options for Affordable Toronto Transit Commission Fares for Post-Secondary Students."

The U-Pass framework adopted by the TTC Board on March 20, 2018 depends on mandatory participation from all eligible students. Due to the provincial government's "Student Choice Initiative," mandatory participation is no longer possible. That is why we support the exploration of options for discounted post-secondary student single-fare and monthly passes.

TTCriders regularly hears stories from post-secondary students who choose to skip classes and tutorials because of the high cost of transit and long commute times. At \$122.45 per month, the existing post-secondary monthly pass discount remains out of reach for many students who are facing high rents, average tuition of \$7,000 to \$8,000 for domestic students, and cuts to OSAP. This unaffordable monthly pass is the only discount currently offered to full-time university and college students who are not eligible for a discounted single TTC fare. By contrast, discounted single fares are available to seniors, youth ages 13 to 19, and eligible Fair Pass recipients. The current Post-Secondary Metropass price is equivalent to 39 trips per month at the adult fare, but the average post-secondary student who uses transit takes only 30 TTC trips per month.¹

Further, students often undergo major transitions in their lives and especially in their commuting patterns throughout their studies. Research shows that such transitional moments are key points when people settle into what become habitual travel behaviours.² Targeting students with discounted fares is potentially a strategic way of shifting mode-share toward transit and away from driving at moments when people are especially open to reassessing their travel choices.

We urge you to adopt MM10.7 to explore affordable transit options for students. We support a discounted single fare for students, and lower fares for all.

Sincerely,

Shleagh Pizey-Allen
Executive Director, TTCriders

Ayaan Abdulle
Student and TTCriders Board Member

TTCriders is a membership-based organization of transit riders with a vision for an affordable, accessible world-class public transit system.

¹ Based on Transportation Tomorrow Survey and 2015 StudentMoveTO survey.
http://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Commission_reports_and_information/Commission_meetings/2018/March_20/Reports/9_U_Pass_Policy.pdf

² See e.g. <https://infoscience.epfl.ch/record/128461/files/COST355-RapportLaSUR.pdf>,
<https://link.springer.com/journal/11116/30/1/page/1>