

# Transit Fare Equity Transit Discount Card Pilot Project: Proposal for an Evaluation Plan

September 6 2016

**PREPARED FOR**

---

**Transit Fare Equity Working Group**  
c/o Social Policy, Analysis & Research  
Social Development,  
Finance & Administration

City of Toronto

**PREPARED BY**

---



## Summary

This is a proposal for a comprehensive evaluation of the TFE Transit Discount Card (the Card) during its first year of operation. It has been prepared by the consulting firm Taylor Newberry Consulting (TNC), who gathered input from the TFE Working Group. The methodology outlined in this proposed plan will gather actionable information about program costs, processes, and short term outcomes of the pilot program. It focuses particularly on tracking the relationship between use of the Transit Discount Card and changes in the ways that users engage with services and supports in the community, since this type of behaviour change is the key pathway through which the Card is intended to lead to improvements in social equity and quality of life. The methodology employs a pre-post user survey, implemented through a variety of online and offline channels. Qualitative data will be gathered through individual in-depth interviews with potential users, users, and City staff involved in the project. Draft copies of these tools are appended to this proposal.

It is expected that the evaluation plan described here will evolve through further consultation with key staff and partners before it is implemented.

## Table of Contents

Summary.....	2
Table of Contents .....	3
Project Overview .....	4
Evaluation Plan.....	5
Evaluation Objectives .....	5
Program Logic Model.....	5
Inputs: Costs for the City of Toronto.....	6
Program Implementation.....	6
Short-term Outcomes.....	7
Intermediate Outcomes.....	7
Long-term Outcomes .....	8
Evaluation Questions.....	9
Evaluation Methodology .....	10
Phase 1 Pre-Launch Exploratory Focus Groups with Potential Users .....	10
Presto Data .....	11
Baseline User Survey.....	11
Post Test User Survey .....	11
In-Depth User Focus Groups .....	12
Phase 2 Pre-Launch Exploratory Focus Groups with Potential Users .....	12
TESS Staff Interviews .....	12
TESS Staff Survey .....	12
Evaluation Timeline.....	13
Analysis and Final Report .....	13
Appendix A: Draft Survey Tools .....	16
Toronto Transit Fare Equity Pilot Project Baseline Survey .....	16
Application Procedure .....	16
Current Transportation Use.....	17
Current Levels of Activity .....	18
Information about you .....	19
Toronto Transit Fare Equity Pilot Project Post-Test Survey .....	22
Background Information .....	22
Current Transportation Use .....	22
Current Levels of Activity .....	24
Appendix B: Draft Interview Schedules .....	26
Pre-Launch Exploratory Interviews with Potential Users .....	26
In-Depth User Interviews .....	27
Staff Interviews.....	28

## Project Overview

Affordable transportation contributes to overall health and well-being through ensuring access to essential services and opportunities to participate in the community<sup>1</sup>. However, for low income residents, particularly those receiving social assistance who are often more reliant upon public transit compared to more economically advantaged populations<sup>2</sup>, the current cost of public transportation in Toronto functions as a barrier to equitable opportunities and can contribute to social isolation and exclusion. Therefore, current fare prices do not reflect equity in transportation as economically disadvantaged individuals are required to contribute a proportionally greater amount of their income to purchasing transit fares<sup>3</sup>.

To address fare inequity, the Toronto Transit Fare Equity (TFE) Pilot Project will be implemented in a phased approach beginning in September 2017. Transit Discount Cards<sup>4</sup> will be provided to eligible individuals who apply for the card at any of the 19 TESS Employment Centres. Participants will be provided with a specially designed Presto card that allows them to pay a discounted fare. This card will function like any other Presto card, and can be loaded with money at kiosks throughout the city. Phase 1 will provide discounted transit fares to Ontario Works clients not in receipt of transportation supports. Phase 2 will commence in May 2018 and will extend the Transit Discount Card to ODSP clients, residents receiving or waitlisted for housing supports or child care subsidy<sup>5</sup>, and Phase 3 will provide the Transit Discount Card to all other Toronto residents living with an income below the Low Income Measure +15% threshold in May 2019. Phase 1 is the focus of the current evaluation framework. The TFE Working Group estimates that approximately 10,000 people, or 30% of those who are eligible may choose to use the Card during phase 1.

This project is grounded within larger City-wide goals of poverty reduction. Specifically, the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy emphasizes making transit more affordable for low income residents. Affordable transportation will permit greater social inclusion and allow residents with low incomes to participate more fully in the community obtaining both health and well-being benefits. Given that Toronto is currently enhancing public transportation services, the need for affordable transportation has been recognized to ensure that all individuals reliant upon public transportation will benefit from these enhancements<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Toronto Public Health. (2013). *Next Stop Health: Transit Access and Health Inequities in Toronto*.

<sup>2</sup> Toronto Public Health. (2013). *Next Stop Health: Transit Access and Health Inequalities in Toronto*.

<sup>3</sup> Toronto Fair Fare Coalition. (n.d.). *Affordable TTC: A Ticket to the City*.

<sup>4</sup> The official name of this new card has not yet been chosen. In this evaluation plan, it is referred to as the Transit Discount Card or The Card.

<sup>5</sup> Phase 2 may be split into two sub-phases, with ODSP clients gaining access before other groups.

<sup>6</sup> Toronto Transit Commission. (2014). *Toward a Policy Framework for Toronto Transit Fare Equity*. Reference Number AFS#19627

# Evaluation Plan

## *Evaluation Objectives*

There are three primary objectives of the proposed evaluation framework, identified by the Transit Fare Equity Working Group:

**1) To document the costs of the program during Phase 1**

The evaluation will determine the total cost of the program in Phase 1. This analysis will be used to make informed projections about the cost of expanding the model in Phase 2. This first phase of the evaluation **will not consider** the ways in which the program might save costs elsewhere in the system. For example, the evaluation will not focus on the program's influence in reducing the need for non-profits to spend City grant money on transit tokens, or reducing the burden on emergency services through health promotion.

**2) To understand successes and challenges associated with program implementation**

**3) To document program impact on low income residents during Phase 1**

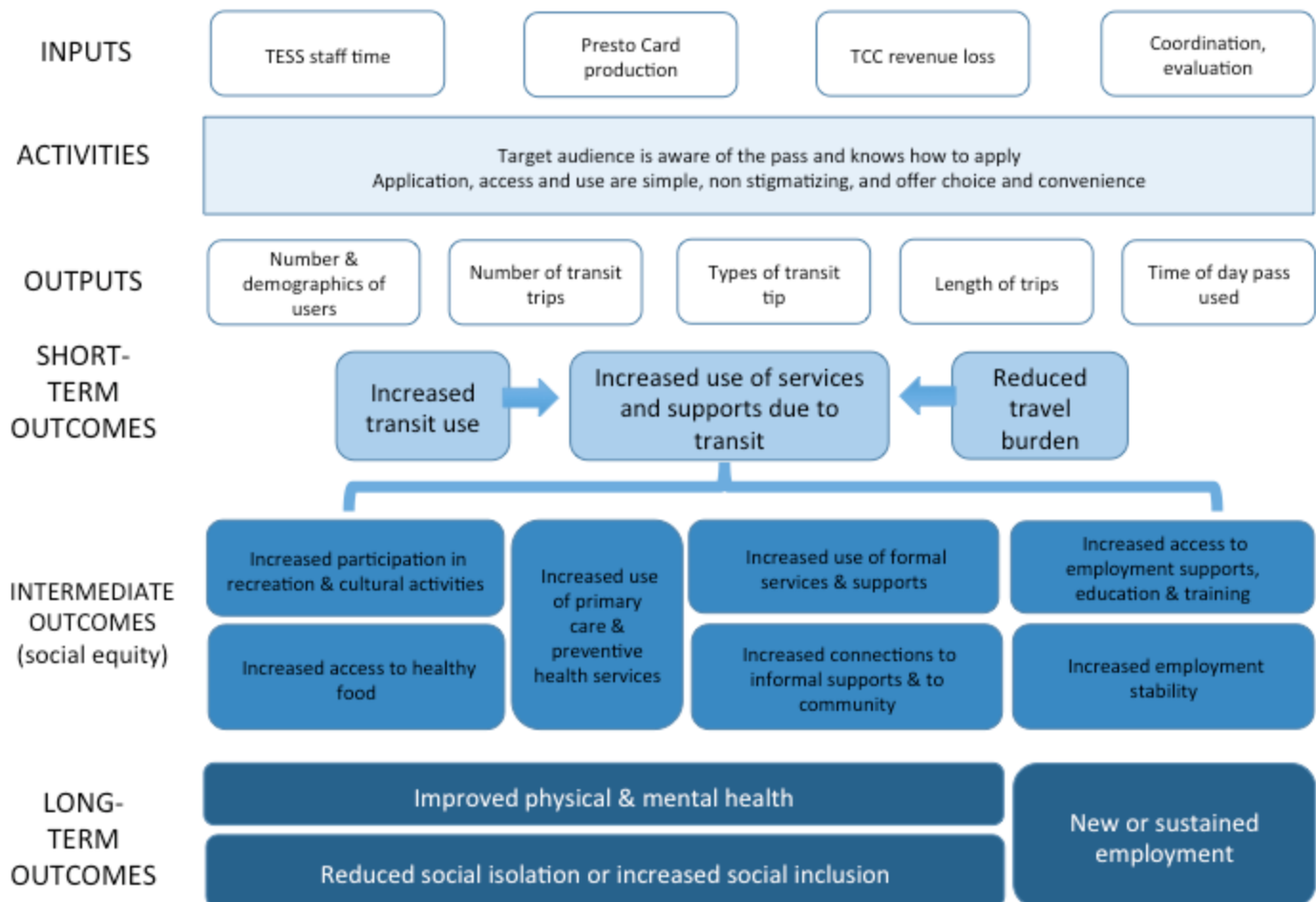
These objectives are explained in detail in the next section.

## *Program Logic Model*

A program logic model for the TFE pilot project is presented on the following page to illustrate the relationship between program activities and short-term (i.e., initial meaningful benefits that occur quickly), intermediate, and long-term outcomes (durable, higher level changes expected to result over a longer period of time). This diagram is intended to illustrate the intended path toward change.

The following sections are intended to compliment the program logic model by providing a rationale for the inclusion of the outcomes and further explanations to illustrate why specific changes are predicted to occur. The first section also provides an overview of the factors that will be taken into consideration when evaluating the implementation of the program.

### City of Toronto Transit Fare Equity Transit Discount Card: Draft Program Logic Model



#### Inputs: Costs for the City of Toronto

The primary inputs, or costs, for the Transit Discount Card are staff time in TESS Employment Centres, the production of the cards themselves, and the revenue loss to the Transit system due to reduced fares. Resources will also be required for program coordination, ongoing cross-departmental communication and evaluation. Because the Card is part of the existing Presto system, use of the Card will not require any change in the work routine for TTC staff, other than making them aware that a new type of Presto card exists and explaining how to monitor for fraudulent use of the Card. During Phase 1, marketing of the Card will not be a significant cost because the targeted users are easily reached through the TESS office.

#### Program Implementation

The key activities involved in implementing the program include:

- A short application process, through which TESS staff members confirm eligibility and applicants agree to terms around (for example) data collection and use
- Production of the Card, which includes taking a digital ID photo and producing the card (takes place during the same visit as the original application)
- Explanation of how the Card works (also completed during application visit).

Once the presto Card is issued, it is the intent of the program that participants will use the TCC as any other rider would, without facing any unusual barriers or experiencing any stigmatization connected to the fact that they are subsidized users. Since the pass includes a photo ID, there is no expectation of a high level of fraudulent use.

Program uptake among eligible low-income residents may be dependent upon a number of factors. First the eligible individuals must be aware of the Transit Discount Card and know how to apply. Second, the process of applying for and accessing a Transit Discount Card must be simple and should offer users choice and convenience. Finally, the process of applying, accessing and using the Card should not be stigmatizing.

### Short-term Outcomes

If OW clients purchase and use the Transit Discount Card, it is expected that their transit use will increase because the burden of travelling throughout the City (e.g., spending less time, money and energy getting where they need to go) will be diminished. Card users should find that the cost of their travel through the city has been reduced. Such changes are necessary in order for intermediate outcomes related to activity generation to occur because there will be fewer obstacles to community participation.

### Intermediate Outcomes

Understanding how affordable transportation impacts the lives of residents with low income has been recognized as essential when evaluating discount transit initiatives<sup>7,8,9,10,11,12</sup>. Such a focus illustrates that transit isn't just about providing a method of travel. It's also about providing opportunities to participate in the community and access resources and services necessary to meet basic needs. Transit's role in increasing access to these opportunities is referred to as 'social equity in transportation'<sup>13</sup>. Social equity in transportation increases the likelihood that all citizens can benefit from resources, supports and services in the community.

Extensive literature suggests that access to transit affects residents' ability to access essential goods and services such as food, employment, education, and healthcare, as well as recreational and cultural activities<sup>14</sup>. Such access also affects an individual's ability to maintain connections with friends and family as well as participate in other social activities<sup>15</sup>. A recent report by Toronto Public Health<sup>16</sup> highlights the following findings. Currently, the cost of public transit:

- prohibits access to health services for individuals and families

<sup>7</sup> Vibrant Communities Calgary. (n.d.). *Social Return on Investment Case Study: Low Income Monthly Transit Pass*.

<sup>8</sup> Community Services Department. (2008). *Affordable Transit Pass Pilot Program-Six Month Program Evaluation*. City of Hamilton.

<sup>9</sup> Civics Research Co-Operative. (2004). *Transit Affordability: A Study Focused On Personas with Low Incomes in the Region of Waterloo*.

<sup>10</sup> Committee of the Whole, Community and Health Services. (2013). *Transit Fare Subsidy Pilot Program: Evaluation Findings and Policy Recommendations*. The Regional Municipality of York.

<sup>11</sup> Taylor Newberry Consulting. (2013). *An Evaluation of the Affordable Bus Pass Program*. Guelph, Ontario.

<sup>12</sup> Commissioner of Human Services. (2016). *Affordable Transportation Pilot Program Results*. Region of Peel.

<sup>13</sup> Kramer, A., Goldstein, A. & Canaran, M. (2015). *Social Equity: Background Paper for the Regional Transportation Plan Review*. Metrolinx.

<sup>14</sup> Social Exclusion Unit. (2003). *Making the Connections: Final Report on Transportation and Social Exclusion*. London, UK.

<sup>15</sup> Toronto Public Health. (2013). *Next Stop Health: Transit Access and Health Inequalities in Toronto*.

<sup>16</sup> Toronto Public Health. (2013). *Next Stop Health: Transit Access and Health Inequalities in Toronto*.

- functions as a barrier for individuals with low incomes in travelling to supermarkets with high quality, culturally appropriate and affordable food
- prevents those with low income from securing stable employment or accessing educational opportunities
- excludes economically disadvantaged individuals from recreational and social activities

Findings from an evaluation of the Affordable Bus Pass Program in Guelph, Ontario suggested that some low income residents often prioritized transit trips when they were unable to consistently afford regular transit use. For example, individuals prioritized transit trips to medical appointments over transit trips to visit families and friends<sup>17</sup>. Similarly, findings from a project by the Toronto Fair Fare Coalition found that for some residents, the cost of transit fares restricts access to services and supports and for some, decisions must even be made between purchasing food and buying transit fares for medical appointments<sup>18</sup>.

The following table presents the benefits of discounted transit fares as documented in evaluations of discount transit initiatives from a number of communities.

Community	Benefits of Program Participation
<b>Calgary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% of program participants agreed that the pass helped them to attend medical appointments</li> <li>• 59% agreed that the pass helped them to sustain employment</li> <li>• 55% agreed that the pass enabled them to take more training/education classes</li> <li>• 49% agreed that the pass helped them find employment or better employment</li> <li>• 48% agreed that the pass helped them to volunteer more often</li> </ul>
<b>Hamilton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 84% of evaluation participants agreed that the pass made it easier for them to run errands and schedule appointments</li> <li>• 87% agreed that the pass helped them to maintain connections to family and friends</li> <li>• 75% agreed that the pass has helped them to keep their job</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Municipality of York</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 81% of survey respondents found it easier to get to work as a result of the program</li> <li>• 70-79% felt that the program helped them access daily needs (e.g., getting to doctor appointments, child care, grocery shopping)</li> </ul>
<b>Region of Peel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21.5% of survey respondents were able to find employment</li> <li>• 84.2% reported visits to employment services up to 3 times per week</li> <li>• 84.6% reported visits to medical services up to 3 times per week</li> <li>• 87% reported visits to faith services up to 3 times per week</li> <li>• 62.6% reported visits to food services up to 3 times per week</li> <li>• 59.4% reported visits to educational services up to 3 times per week</li> </ul>

Together, these findings suggest that new activity associated with social equity should be generated in the aforementioned domains when economically disadvantaged individuals increase their use of public transportation as a result of reduced transit fares. As a result, individuals should be provided with greater opportunity to participate in the community.

### Long-term Outcomes

When new activity is generated by transit use in the domains described above, it is expected that quality of life will be improved. As a result of increased community participation and increased access and/or use of resources, services

<sup>17</sup> Taylor Newberry Consulting. (2013). *An Evaluation of the Affordable Bus Pass Program*. Guelph, Ontario.

<sup>18</sup> Toronto Fair Fare Coalition. (n.d.). *Affordable TTC: A Ticket to the City*.



and supports, program participants will experience improved health and well-being, increased social inclusion, and improved economic stability<sup>19</sup>.

## Evaluation Questions

The proposed evaluation questions are intended to assess the program's cost, implementation, and impact. The following table presents the overarching evaluation questions, complimented by more specific questions meant to capture additional learnings about the program. Questions about quality of life focus on longer-term changes in the lives of users. This first-year evaluation plan is designed to gather some information about these questions, and it will be important to keep these questions in mind as the evaluation unfolds. However, the year 1 evaluation will not address them as comprehensively as questions in other categories.

<b>1. What is the cost of the program to the City of Toronto? (inputs)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often is the Transit Discount Card used?</li> <li>• What type of transit (e.g., bus, street car, subway) do users ride?</li> <li>• What are the lengths of trips taken by users?</li> <li>• What times of day is the Card used?</li> <li>• How has the application process affected the function of Social Services offices?</li> </ul>
<b>2. Is the program accessible and convenient for riders? (activities)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the target audience aware of the Card?</li> <li>• Are some eligible people or groups less likely to apply than others?</li> <li>• Does the target audience know how to apply for the Card?</li> <li>• Does the program offer users choice and convenience?</li> <li>• Is the process of applying for, accessing and using the Card stigmatizing?</li> </ul>
<b>3. Does the program change transit behaviours? (short-term outcomes)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do Card users ride transit more often?</li> <li>• Does the Card reduce rider burden? (e.g., do riders spend less money, time and energy getting where they need to go?)</li> <li>• Does the Card generate new activity among users (i.e., do they engage with the community in new ways that did not occur before using the Card)?</li> </ul>
<b>4. Does the program promote social equity? (intermediate outcomes)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do Card users access formal services and informal supports that enhance social equity?</li> <li>• Do they participate in work, recreation, training or other activities in new ways?</li> <li>• Does the Card reduce social exclusion among users?</li> </ul>
<b>5. Does the program positively impact riders' quality of life? (intermediate to long-term outcomes)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does program participation improve health and well-being?</li> <li>• Does program participation lead to new or sustained employment, increased hours and/or increased employment stability?</li> </ul>

<sup>19</sup> Hertel, S., Keil, R. & Collens, M. (2016). *Next Stop: Social Equity: Routes to Fairer Transit Access in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area*. The City Institute at York University.

## Evaluation Methodology

To understand the cost, implementation and impact of Phase 1 of the TFE Pilot Project a mixed-methods approach will be employed. The methods described in the following sections draw upon the strengths of existing evaluation frameworks from other communities, and also build upon these existing methods to suit the unique context of the TFE project. Reports associated with the following discount transit fare programs were reviewed to understand best practice as it relates to the evaluation of discount transit fare initiatives:

- Calgary's Low Income Monthly Transit Pass<sup>20</sup>
- Waterloo's Discount Bus Pass and Bus Tickets Program<sup>21</sup>
- Guelph's Affordable Bus Pass Program<sup>22</sup>
- Hamilton's Affordable Transit Pass Program<sup>23</sup>
- York Region's Transit Fare Subsidy Program<sup>24</sup>
- Region of Peel's Affordable Transportation Pilot Program<sup>25</sup>

All methods described below will be implemented in a manner that complies with privacy and accessibility legislation.

### Phase 1 Pre-Launch Exploratory Focus Groups with Potential Users

The 2015 TFE survey provided a high level overview of the ways in which people with low incomes use transit. It also generated useful information about the level of interest in different approaches to making transit more affordable. However, the survey did not gather in-depth qualitative information about the perceptions of people with low incomes regarding transit, and the role that transit use plays in their day-to-day lives. People use transit for many different reasons, and the obstacles to increased transit use may vary depending on age, family structure, and many other factors. This creates a challenge for the evaluation design. It will be difficult for the evaluation survey to track the ways in which the Transit Discount Card alters the behaviour of users, if these behaviour changes vary from person to person.

In spring of 2017, approximately 10 focus groups will be conducted with potential Transit Discount Card users (i.e. individuals who are eligible for Phase 1). Questions asked during these discussions will focus on identifying activities that are currently out of reach for participants due to barriers posed by transportation, and on the activities they might participate in, or participate in to a greater extent, if they received discounted fares. Findings from these discussions will be used to identify the key behavioural changes that should be tracked in the baseline and post-test evaluation surveys (these surveys are described in greater detail below).

Participants for these focus groups will be recruited through TESS offices. In order to ensure that participants see the discussions as confidential, an independent evaluator will facilitate focus groups. A small honorarium will be paid to each participant. It is estimated that a total of approximately 100 people (10 per group) will participate.

<sup>20</sup> Vibrant Communities Calgary. (n.d.). *Social Return on Investment Case Study: Low Income Monthly Transit Pass*.

<sup>21</sup> Civics Research Co-Operative. (2004). *Transit Affordability: A Study Focused On Personas with Low Incomes in the Region of Waterloo*.

<sup>22</sup> Taylor Newberry Consulting. (2013). *An Evaluation of the Affordable Bus Pass Program*. Guelph, Ontario.

<sup>23</sup> Community Services Department. (2008). *Affordable Transit Pass Pilot Program-Six Month Program Evaluation*. City of Hamilton.

<sup>24</sup> Committee of the Whole, Community and Health Services. (2013). *Transit Fare Subsidy Pilot Program: Evaluation Findings and Policy Recommendations*. The Regional Municipality of York.

<sup>25</sup> Commissioner of Human Services. (2016). *Affordable Transportation Pilot Program Results*. Region of Peel.

## Presto Data

For discount transit initiatives that have been implemented in other communities, the financial cost of the program is well documented and has generally relied on the collection of user data. For Toronto, the cost of Phase 1 of the program can be understood by generating descriptive statistics from Presto data about the frequency of Transit Discount Card use, the type of transit used, the length of the trips, the time of day of the trips, as well as any other pertinent information. Time of day is important because the cost of use to the TTC is lower if the Cards are used in off-peak times where there is excess capacity in the system. The time and energy required by staff in social services offices to implement the program should also be factored into cost calculations.

## Baseline User Survey

Evaluations of other discount transit programs have generally collected data at only one point in time. While such a method can provide useful insights into program benefits, it lacks the ability to observe changes across time. Proposed TFE program outcomes are associated with improvements and increases in a number of domains. Therefore, a method must be implemented that will generate data to measure such changes prior to program participation and again after a period of sustained involvement.

Program participants will provide both baseline and post-test data. A survey will be completed by all successful program applicants at the time of application to collect baseline information and other pertinent information including reasons for applying, past transit use, current levels of activities in a variety of domains, as well as user demographic information. The target number for the baseline survey will be 90% of all users, or 9000 responses. The survey will be completed in the TESS office, using an online interface or a paper-based approach.

All information provided through the baseline survey will remain confidential. At the time of baseline survey completion participants will be assigned a unique participant code and will also be asked for consent to contact them to complete a follow-up survey and/or invite them to participate in an individual interview. Participants will be asked for both their email address, if applicable, as well as phone numbers. Multiple methods of contact will be useful for ensuring adequate post-test survey participation. Sample language to be used on the consent form is presented in the example below:

*The Transit Fare Equity is a pilot project for Toronto. The future of this program will rely on feedback from riders as a result of program evaluation. From time to time you may be contacted by TESS or external data collectors for this purpose. Participation is optional and will not affect eligibility for the program. Do you wish to be contacted for the purpose of program evaluation?*

## Post Test User Survey

A post-test survey will be completed after 6 months of program participation<sup>26</sup>. An invitation email will be sent to all participants who gave consent to be contacted that will include a link to the post-test survey which will be hosted online. This link will be connected with participants' unique participant code so that their post-test responses can be compared with their baseline responses. After a period of 2 weeks, participants who have not completed the online version of the survey will be contacted by telephone for participation in an identical telephone survey. The target number for the post-test survey will be 10% of all users, or 1000 responses. Proposed survey questions are

<sup>26</sup> This time period was used in Hamilton's Affordable Transit Pass Program evaluation. Given that the project will be required to report to city Council in July of 2018, 10 months after launch, this interval seems appropriate in the Toronto context.

presented in Appendix A. However, these questions will likely change as information is collected during the Pre-Launch Exploratory Focus Groups.

### **In-Depth User Focus Groups**

Approximately 10 focus group discussions with Transit Discount Card users will be conducted to collect in-depth information about experiences of program participation including the application process, experiences of stigma, and the perceived role of the Card in changes in activities and broader quality of life benefits. Findings from the focus groups will provide explanations for some of the survey findings as they relate to these changes and will therefore provide stronger evidence of the impact of the TFE Pilot Program.

Participants will be recruited using contact information gathered through the baseline survey, and through TESS offices. In order to ensure that participants see the discussions as confidential, an independent evaluator will facilitate focus groups. A small honorarium will be paid to each participant. It is estimated that a total of approximately 100 people (10 per group) will participate.

### **Phase 2 Pre-Launch Exploratory Focus Groups with Potential Users**

The Phase 1 evaluation report is expected to include recommendations for the roll-out of phase 2, which will make the Transit Discount Card available to ODSP clients and residents receiving or waitlisted for housing supports or child care subsidy. During phase 1, exploratory focus groups with potential phase 2 users will be completed in order to inform these recommendations. These focus groups will use a format similar to the Phase 1 Exploratory Focus Groups. Questions will focus on identifying activities that are currently out of reach for participants due to barriers posed by transportation, and on the activities they might participate in, or participate in to a greater extent, if they received discounted fares. Findings from these discussions will be used to highlight the ways in which Phase 2 users may be different from Phase 1 users, and to recommend how the program can adapt to meet the unique needs of this population.

Participants will be recruited using contact information gathered through TESS offices. A small honorarium will be paid to each participant. In order to ensure that participants see the discussions as confidential, an independent evaluator will facilitate focus groups. It is estimated that a total of approximately 100 people (10 per group) will participate.

### **TESS Staff Interviews**

A small number of interviews with selected staff from the TESS Employment Centres involved in the application process will be conducted. Interviewees will be staff members who have been most directly involved in administering the Discount Transit Card. The purpose of these interviews will provide information about implementation challenges, the potential for stigmatization and the process of accessing the Card. Questions will explore the experience of Card users as observed by staff. The discussion will also explore the administrative aspects of running the program; the ways in which implementing the Card has affected the functioning of Employment Centres or the work routines of individual workers. A total of approximately 8 individual or small group interviews will take place.

### **TESS Staff Survey**

All TESS staff who have played a role in implementing and delivering the Discount Transit Card will be surveyed. The focus of this short survey will be on estimating the time and resources required by TESS staff to implement the program. A draft version of this survey will be developed in collaboration with TESS managers.

## Evaluation Timeline

The following table presents the proposed time line for data collection associated with the program evaluation.

Evaluation Method	Data Collection Period
<b>Phase 1 Pre-Launch Exploratory Focus Groups</b>	Spring 2017
<b>Presto Data Collection</b>	September 2017-May 2018
<b>Baseline User Survey</b>	Beginning at program launch in September 2017 and continuing as new participants access the Card. For purposes of Phase 1 report, baseline data gathered up to December 2017 will be used.
<b>Post-test Survey</b>	After 6 months of program participation: beginning February 2018 and ending (for the purposes of the Phase 1 report) in May 2018
<b>In-Depth Focus Groups with Current Users &amp; Exploratory Focus Groups with Potential Phase 2 users</b>	May 2018
<b>Phase 2 Pre-Launch Exploratory Interviews</b>	May 2018
<b>Staff Interviews</b>	May 2018
<b>Data analysis</b>	October 2017-June 2018
<b>Completion of draft Phase 1 Evaluation Report</b>	June 2018
<b>Presentation of Phase 1 Evaluation Report to City Council</b>	July 2018

## Analysis and Final Report

The table below shows how the proposed evaluation methods will generate answers to core evaluation questions.

Key Evaluation Questions	Presto Data	User Pre-Post Surveys	User Focus Groups (Exploratory and in-depth)	TESS Staff Interviews	TESS staff survey
What is the cost of the program to the City of Toronto?	★			★	★
Is the program accessible and convenient for riders?		★	★	★	
Does the program change transit behaviours?	<i>may be helpful</i>	★	★		
Does the program promote social equity and positively impact user's quality of life?		★	★		

Descriptive statistics will be generated from Presto data to document the costs of the program in Phase 1. In particular, the Presto system will provide detailed data on the number of Transit Discount Card holders who use the cards, number and types of trips taken by users, the costs of use for the City and for users. It may also be possible to gather information about the geographic areas of the city in which trips are most frequently initiated. If data from the Presto system can be linked to information from the Ontario Works database, it may be possible to break down the indicators listed above by user age, immigration status, employment status, or family structure. Such analyses would only be possible if the technical challenges could be overcome and the privacy of users could be protected.

Data from the survey of TESS staff will also be useful in estimating the costs of the program to the City. Although the survey will not provide an objective index of the time required to implement the Card, within TESS offices, it will gather perceptions of workers about this issue.

Analysis of baseline and post-test survey data will focus on process questions around access and useability, short term outcomes related to transit use, and intermediate outcomes related to social equity. The pre-test gathers detailed demographic information and asks the respondent to describe their current transit use, their level of community activity in a number of domains. The post test includes identical questions about transit use and activity levels, and check to see whether the participant's perceived health or employment status has changed. The pre test asks respondents to provide contact information for the purposes of contacting them about the post-test. This contact information should make it possible to pair the responses of one individual at pre-test and post-test.

Generally speaking, analysis of these data will employ simple paired-sample T-tests or similar tests to detect changes in responses to identical questions over time. Demographic questions asked on the pre-test will make it possible to compare the program's impact for people of different ages and backgrounds.

Responses to question 3 on the pre-test will generate data about client perceptions of the application process. Short term outcomes, related to the frequency and type of TTC use, will be tracked through items 4-8 on the pre-test, and through identical items on the post test. These items are drawn directly from the TTC customer satisfaction survey. By comparing responses to these questions at pre test and post test, using a matched-samples t-test or other similar tests, it will be possible to determine whether transit use has changed for participants.

Question 9 on the pre-test is the same as question 8 on the post-test. This set of question is intended to provide a snapshot of the ways in which respondents interact with services and supports throughout the city. By comparing responses to these questions at pre test and post test, it will be possible to see whether the Card project is achieving the intermediate (or social equity) outcomes identified in the logic model (e.g., Increased participation in recreation & cultural activities; Increased access to healthy food).

Three different kinds of focus groups (a total of approximately 30 groups) will be conducted through this evaluation project. In addition, 8 interviews with TESS workers will be completed. The questions for these discussions will be open-ended and exploratory. These methods will generate a large amount of qualitative data in the form of detailed written notes kept by a dedicated not-taker. These data will require intensive thematic analysis, during which the logic model will act as an analytic guide. Ongoing input from the working group may also help to identify emerging themes or unexpected findings in these data.

A draft report will be written that documents the implementation and impact of the TFE Pilot Project and will be presented to the project's advisory committee for feedback. A final report will be submitted to Toronto City Council in July of 2018.

## Appendix A: Draft Survey Tools<sup>27</sup>

### *Toronto Transit Fare Equity Pilot Project Baseline Survey*

Thank you for answering this survey. It is being run by \_\_\_\_ to collect information about the Transit Discount Card). You can choose not to complete this survey. If you do refuse, nothing bad will happen. It will not affect your access to the Transit Discount Card. You can also choose to skip some questions on the survey. No-one other than the research team will see your answers. We will only report group results (e.g., averages). The information we collect will help us to write a report for City Council. They will use it to decide about the future of the Transit Discount Card program.

This survey will take about 15 minutes to complete.

#### **Do you agree to participate?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

#### **Application Procedure**

##### **1. How did you hear about the Transit Discount Card?**

##### **2. Why are you interested in applying for the Transit Discount Card?**

##### **3. When I registered for the Card,**

	1	2	3	4	5
The registration process was simple	1	2	3	4	5
TESS staff were able to answer my questions about the program	1	2	3	4	5
The TESS location was accessible and convenient.	1	2	3	4	5
I felt comfortable applying for the Transit Discount Card	1	2	3	4	5

1=strongly disagree; 2=somewhat disagree; 3=neither agree or disagree; 4=somewhat agree; 5=strongly agree

<sup>27</sup> Since this survey is intended to be completed online the information included in this document just shows questions and response options, not what the actual formatting would look like



## Current Transportation Use

### 4. What form of transportation do you currently use most often?

Walk	1	2	3	4
Bike	1	2	3	4
Personal vehicle	1	2	3	4
TTC (e.g., bus, streetcar, subway)	1	2	3	4
Wheel-Trans	1	2	3	4
Taxi	1	2	3	4
Uber	1	2	3	4
Rides from friends or family	1	2	3	4
Other	1	2	3	4

1=never; 2=rarely; 3=sometimes; 4=often

### 5. How often do you generally use TTC? (city bus, subway, street car)?

- ☐ Once a day or more often
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Once every few weeks
- ☐ Every now and then – less than once every few weeks
- ☐ Have not used TTC in the last 12 months

### 6. What is the purpose of your TTC trips?

Pleasure / recreation	1	2	3	4
Going to or coming from school	1	2	3	4
Going to or coming from work	1	2	3	4
Attending to personal business	1	2	3	4
Grocery shopping	1	2	3	4
Other shopping	1	2	3	4

1=never; 2=rarely; 3=sometimes; 4=often

### 7. What type of transit did you use on your most recent trip on the TTC? (you can check more than one)

- ☐ Subway
- ☐ Bus
- ☐ Streetcar

**8. What fare do you use most often to pay for your TTC trips?**

- ☐ Cash  
☐ Ticket/Token  
☐ Monthly Pass  
☐ Presto  
☐ Free tickets, tokens or passes from a community agency or City of Toronto program  
☐ Other

**Current Levels of Activity****9. Please indicate how often you participate in each of the following activities**

1=never; 2=rarely (less than once per month); 3=sometimes (1 to 3 times per month); 4=weekly; 5=daily

Attending medical/dental appointments	1	2	3	4	5
Taking my children to medical appointments	1	2	3	4	5
Taking my children to child care or school	1	2	3	4	5
Attending school myself					
Attending counselling/mental health services appointments	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in skills and/or employment training	1	2	3	4	5
Going to the grocery store or food bank	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteering in the community	1	2	3	4	5
Visiting family and friends	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in recreational activities in the community (e.g., sports, music or sport related lessons, visiting parks or historic sites, going to the movies, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Attending community events (e.g., local festivals, holiday events, fairs)	1	2	3	4	5
Attending spiritual or faith based institutions or services	1	2	3	4	5

**10. In the last month, have you missed an appointment or activity because of transportation issues (getting there was not possible, too expensive, too time consuming or too inconvenient?)**

	Missed due to transportation issues	
I have missed or not scheduled medical appointments for myself or a family member	Yes	No
I have not taken my children to child care or school	Yes	No
I have missed classes or not attended school events	Yes	No
I have missed or not scheduled counselling appointments for myself or a family member	Yes	No
I have not attended employment or skills training	Yes	No
I have not gone to the grocery store or food bank	Yes	No
I have missed or not been involved in volunteering opportunities	Yes	No
I have not visited with family and friends	Yes	No
I have not participated in recreational activities in the community (e.g., sports, music or sport related lessons, visiting parks or historic sites, going to the movies, etc.)	Yes	No
I have not attended community events (e.g., local festivals, holiday events, fairs)	Yes	No
I have missed spiritual or faith based services	Yes	No

**11. In what ways do you think the TFE Transit Discount Card will make a difference in your life and/or the life of your family?**

--

**Information about you**

**12. What is your gender?**

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Intersex
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Trans - Female to Male
- ☐ Trans - Male to Female
- ☐ Two-Spirit
- ☐ Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**13. What is your current age?**

- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-29
- ☐ 30-34
- ☐ 35-39
- ☐ 40-44
- ☐ 45-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60-64
- ☐ 65+

**14. What is your highest level of education?**

- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ Completed high school
- ☐ Some college or university
- ☐ Completed college
- ☐ Completed a university Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Completed post-graduate degree

**15. What is your individual income before tax?**

- ☐ 0 to \$14,999
- ☐ \$15,000 to \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 to \$59,999
- ☐ \$60,000 to \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 to \$124,999
- ☐ \$125,000 and over
- ☐ Don't know

**16. How many children under the age of 18 currently live with you?**

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 or more

**17. In general, would you say your physical health is**

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**18. In general, would you say your mental health is**

- ☐ Excellent  
☐ Very good  
☐ Good  
☐ Fair  
☐ Poor  
☐ Prefer not to answer

**19. If you have a fixed address, please state your postal code**

**20. Are you willing to be contacted in about 6 months to participate in a follow-up survey?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Email address \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Main phone \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Alternate phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your participation! You will be contacted again in approximately 6 months to participate in an additional survey.**

**NOTES:**

- Questions 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 are taken directly or slightly adapted from the 2015 TTC Customer Satisfaction Survey.
- Question 12 uses wording from TPH Client Socio Demographic Data Collection project.
- Questions 17 and 18 are taken directly from the Canadian Community Health Survey

## *Toronto Transit Fare Equity Pilot Project Post-Test Survey*

Thank you for answering this survey. We are sending it to you because you provided us with your contact information when you applied for the Transit Discount Card, and told us that you were willing to be contacted for a follow-up survey. This survey is being run by \_\_\_\_ to collect information about the Transit Discount Card program. You can choose not to complete this survey. If you do refuse, nothing bad will happen. It will not affect your access to the Transit Discount Card. You can also choose to skip some questions on the survey. No-one other than the research team will see your answers. We will only report group results (e.g., averages). The information we collect will help us to write a report for City Council. They will use it to decide about the future of the Transit Discount Card program.

This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

### **Do you agree to participate?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

### **Background Information**

#### **1. What is your current employment status?**

- ☐ Ontario Works recipient  
☐ Employed (part time)  
☐ Employed (full time)  
☐ In School

#### **2. Has your employment status changed since you applied for the Transit Discount Card?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

### **Current Transportation Use**

#### **3. What form of transportation do you currently use most often?**

Walk	1	2	3	4
Bike	1	2	3	4
Personal vehicle	1	2	3	4
TTC (e.g., bus, streetcar, subway)	1	2	3	4
Wheel-Trans	1	2	3	4
Taxi	1	2	3	4
Uber	1	2	3	4
Rides from friends or family	1	2	3	4
Other	1	2	3	4

1=never; 2=rarely; 3=sometimes; 4=often

**4. How often do you generally use TTC? (city bus, subway, street car)?**

- ☐ Once a day or more often
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Once every few weeks
- ☐ Every now and then – less than once every few weeks
- ☐ Have not used TTC in the last 12 months

**5. What is the purpose of your TTC trips?**

Pleasure / recreation	1	2	3	4
Going to or coming from school	1	2	3	4
Going to or coming from work	1	2	3	4
Attending to personal business	1	2	3	4
Grocery shopping	1	2	3	4
Other shopping	1	2	3	4

1=never; 2=rarely; 3=sometimes; 4=often

**6. What type of transit did you use on your most recent trip on the TTC? (you can check more than one)**

- ☐ Subway
- ☐ Bus
- ☐ Streetcar

**7. What fare do you use most often to pay for your TTC trips?**

- ☐ Cash
- ☐ Ticket/Token
- ☐ Monthly Pass
- ☐ Presto
- ☐ Free tickets, tokens or passes from a community agency or City of Toronto program
- ☐ Other

## Current Levels of Activity

### 8. Please indicate how often you participate in each of the following activities

1=never; 2=rarely (less than once per month); 3=sometimes (1 to 3 times per month); 4=weekly; 5=daily

Attending medical/dental appointments	1	2	3	4	5
Taking my children to medical appointments	1	2	3	4	5
Taking my children to child care or school	1	2	3	4	5
Attending school myself					
Attending counselling/mental health services appointments	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in skills and/or employment training	1	2	3	4	5
Going to the grocery store or food bank	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteering in the community	1	2	3	4	5
Visiting family and friends	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in recreational activities in the community (e.g., sports, music or sport related lessons, visiting parks or historic sites, going to the movies, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Attending community events (e.g., local festivals, holiday events, fairs)	1	2	3	4	5
Attending spiritual or faith based institutions or services	1	2	3	4	5

### 9. In the last month, have you missed an appointment or activity because of transportation issues (getting there was not possible, too expensive, too time consuming or too inconvenient?)

	Missed due to transportation issues	
I have missed or not scheduled medical appointments for myself or a family member	Yes	No
I have not taken my children to child care or school	Yes	No
I have missed classes or not attended school events	Yes	No
I have missed or not scheduled counselling appointments for myself or a family member	Yes	No
I have not attended employment or skills training	Yes	No
I have not gone to the grocery store or food bank	Yes	No
I have missed or not been involved in volunteering opportunities	Yes	No
I have not visited with family and friends	Yes	No
I have not participated in recreational activities in the community (e.g., sports, music or sport related lessons, visiting parks or historic sites, going to the movies, etc.)	Yes	No
I have not attended community events (e.g., local festivals, holiday events, fairs)	Yes	No
I have missed spiritual or faith based services	Yes	No



**10. In what ways do you think the TFE Transit Discount Card has made a difference for you and/or your family?**

**11. In general, would you say your physical health is**

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**12. In general, would you say your mental health is**

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**13. If you have a fixed address, please state your postal code**

**Thank you for your participation! The information you have provided will be helpful in writing a report to City Council**

## Appendix B: Draft Interview Schedules

### *Pre-Launch Exploratory Interviews with Potential Users*

Thank you for your agreeing to participate in this interview. It is being conducted on behalf of \_\_\_\_ to collect information about the Transit Fare Equity Pilot Project (the Transit Discount Card). Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose to not answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

Although the Card has not yet been launched, it is designed for people who receive social assistance through Ontario Works and don't have access to any other support for transit use. As someone in that situation, we would like to get a sense of what you think of the idea, and whether you think you would use the Transit Discount Card once it is launched.

The information we collect will help us to write a report for City Council.

Everything you say in this interview will remain confidential. Your participation in this interview will in no way affect your access to any program or service. This interview will take approximately 40 minutes to complete.

#### **Questions:**

Can you describe how you typically get around the city?

Do you use transit?

- If so, how often do you use it? What kind of transit do you use? How do you pay for transit?
- If so, why do you use transit? Do you use it for certain kinds of trips more than others (e.g., to go to appointments, get to work, socialize with friends)?
- If not, why not?

If transit was more affordable for you, would you use it more? Would you use it differently?

(Describe how Transit Discount Card will work)

How interested would you be in the Transit Discount Card? Why?

(Describe application process)

Would you apply for the Transit Discount Card? Why or why not?

## *In-Depth User Interviews*

Thank you for your agreeing to participate in this interview. It is being conducted on behalf of \_\_\_\_ to collect information about the Transit Fare Equity Pilot Project (the Transit Discount Card). Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose to not answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

We are interested to learn more about your experiences as someone who has used the Card. The information we collect will help us to write a report for City Council. Everything you say in this interview will remain confidential. Your participation in this interview will in no way affect your access to the Card, or any other program or service. This interview will take approximately 40 minutes to complete.

### **Questions**

Can you describe how you typically get around the city?

How long have you had a Transit Discount Card?

What made you decide to apply?

What was the application process like?

Has your movement through the city changed as a result of the Transit Discount Card? How do you use the Card?

- Do you use transit more often?
- Do you use different types of transit?
- Do you use transit at different times of day?
- Do you go places or do things that you would not have done before you had the Transit Discount Card? Are you more likely to go to certain appointments for example? More likely to see certain people?

When you are out using your Card, what is the experience like? Are you treated with respect and courtesy?

Would you say your life has changed in any way because of the Transit Discount Card? If so, how? Has life changed for other people in your family?

Will you continue to use the Card in the future?

Is there anything that could be done to make the Transit Discount Card better or more useful for you?

## *Staff Interviews*

Thank you for your agreeing to participate in this interview. It is being conducted on behalf of \_\_\_\_ to collect information about the Transit Fare Equity Pilot Project (the Transit Discount Card). Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose to not answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. You have been invited to participate in this interview because you have been actively involved in the promotion and application of the Card.

### **Questions**

How have you been involved with the Transit Discount Card?

In your office, how has the Card been promoted? Do you think potential users were aware that they could apply for the Card?

- Did you get many questions about the Card from potential applicants? Did you let your clients know about the card?

How did the application process work in your office?

- How long did an application typically take?
- Were there any challenges?
- Were there eligible people who chose not to apply, to your knowledge? If so, why do you think they made that choice?

