



YOUNG PARENTS NO FIXED ADDRESS

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Executive Committee December 1, 2016

Item 2016.EX20.10, TO Prosperity - Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy - 2016 Progress Report and 2017 Work Plan

Hello. My name is Yvette Roberts and I am grateful to have this opportunity to speak to you today as the coordinator of and on behalf of the **Young Parents No Fixed Address** network.

The YPNFA network consists of 35 agencies and organizations from across Toronto and 100 front line staff who work directly with and advocate for the estimated 3,000 vulnerable young pregnant and parenting youth in our city and the nearly 300 homeless women who give birth in this city each year.

Our network is also part of a growing coalition of networks and service providers who have great concerns for the well being of the thousands of low income, precariously housed and vulnerable youth, adults and families in this city should the city and the TTC continue to increase fares and proceed with a Presto Card only fare system.

Based on the recommendations particularly in section 10A of the Progress Report you will have by now reviewed there is a recommendation of a FAIR PASS PROGRAM which is in our opinion a step in the right direction and shows some understanding and compassion for the needs of and challenges faced by our most at risk citizen's.

However we do not approve the extremely slow roll out process being proposed. Waiting 15 months to implement Phase One of this program and 3 to 4 years before full implementation is achieved shows little regard for the immediate needs of your own constituents.

This very report acknowledges and I quote:

“Leveraging the new PRESTO technology and **existing** City administrative processes, the Fair Pass Program recommended in this report puts forward an evidence-based, cost-effective, and user-friendly response to several Council directions to increase transit access for low-income residents.”

So why wait???

This report also acknowledges that the proposal is based on a survey with 3,588 low-income residents and lessons learned from 17 Canadian cities that already have similar programs.

So why keep 193,000 Low Income citizens of this city waiting when the need has been identified and the solution is right here???

From a recent report by the **Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis** we know that “ low income residents may forgo employment, certain medical appointments, and use of government and financial services due to transit costs and travel time.

This may enforce poverty and adversely impact health, as well as the cost burden of health care utilization. “

This same report also notes “a risk of economic and social exclusion when transit is inequitable.”

(Page 8; Toronto Transit Fare Equity Cost Benefit Analysis: Final Results Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis 2016)

People, especially people living on low incomes – rely on the TTC everyday to go to the doctor, work, pick up kids, get food, get access to recreation and all the benefits of life in Toronto.

This report also notes that in Hamilton, 75% of surveyed users of a low-income monthly pass reported that the transit subsidy allowed them to keep their jobs. (page 19) and they predict that for people receiving the transit subsidy:

- 25% of those unemployed will find part-time work at minimum wage and
- 25% of those working part-time will find full-time (or full-time equivalent) work at minimum wage

I am asking you to accept your responsibilities and Move NOW on the commitment each of you have made to end poverty in this city. Now - not in 5 years!!

We are seeking immediate implementation of:

- + **free** and unlimited Metropasses to people on fixed and no income.
- + **Keep The Tokens** for low income citizens who cannot pay up front for a weekly nor afford a monthly pass.
- + Implement a **1 to 2 hour limit on all transfers** benefitting hundreds of parents needing to drop children off to daycares and schools before heading to their low wage jobs.

Along with my colleagues who have already spoken to you today we urge this Council to put public funds where they belong - in the hands of people living with poverty. To the benefit of our most susceptible and determined low income citizens.

When you do, you will save tax payer dollars, actually reduce poverty and enhance the health and well being of almost 200,000 citizens and deliver on your promise to do the right thing.

Thank you.

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