



November 13, 2019

Dear Mayor John Tory and Executive Committee members,

We are writing to express our support for the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy - 2019-2022 Action Plan (EX10.1), and encourage you to support and fund its actions.

We further urge you to implement five additional recommendations to ensure that people living in poverty can access public transit:

1. Fully fund the Fair Pass immediately.

The Fair Pass has had positive and measurable impacts on peoples' health and quality of life. Users are better able to attend work (72% post vs. 36% pre discount); visit family/friends (72% post vs. 34% pre discount), and attend medical appointments (84% post vs. 50% pre discount). People living on low incomes cannot afford to wait years for improved access to public transit.

2. Implement deeper low income discounts, and lower fares for all.

The current Fair Pass discount is not affordable enough for people receiving social assistance. The Phase 1 evaluation surveyed people receiving Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program. Of those surveyed, **27% of eligible Fair Pass users reported that they cannot afford the current cost** of \$119.40 passes and \$2.05 fares.

Other cities in the GTA are providing deeper low income discounts than Toronto – most offer a 50% price reduction, including Hamilton, York Region, Brampton, and Mississauga.

TTCriders and service agencies who form the Fair Fare Coalition are calling for free TTC for people who receive social assistance, free TTC on extreme weather alert days, and \$50 passes and \$1 fares for people earning low incomes.

3. Continue to sell TTC tokens and seniors tickets until an adequate replacement and distribution network is in place (re: Activities 6.2.1 and 6.2.3 in the Work Plan).

It is unacceptable for the TTC to stop selling tickets and tokens on November 30th, before there is an adequate replacement and distribution network for single-use Presto tickets. The [TTC's own analysis](#) recommended that Metrolinx provide at least 421 re-sale/load locations, but there are currently only approx. 200 planned locations at Shoppers Drug Marts and subway stations.

Activity 6.2.1 in the PRS [Work Plan](#) is to "work with PRESTO and Metrolinx to increase the accessibility and availability of PRESTO card fare loading options." Activities 6.2.1 and 6.2.3 of the Action Plan **must be implemented before the TTC stops selling tokens and tickets.**

- 4. Use the latest research to inform equity-based transit performance measures, so that the poorest neighbourhoods in Toronto see service improvements (re: Activity 7.1.2 in the Work Plan).**

We are pleased that the PRS Action Plan includes prioritizing improvement of transit service in the inner suburbs and piloting equity-based performance measures for transit routes in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs). However, the equity lens to evaluate service improvements **must not be limited to NIAs**. Instead, measures should be based in part on income levels, using the latest [research](#) conducted by social policy expert John Stapleton. Mr. Stapleton found that although northern Scarborough has seven of the poorest Toronto neighbourhoods, not one has NIA designation.

- 5. Implement all six Considerations identified in the Phase 1 Evaluation Report.**

The Phase 1 Evaluation Report documents the barriers that people experience when applying for and using the discount cards. For example, eligible individuals reported that they were not using the Fair Pass because they did not know how to use it (33%) and they were not sure where to load money on it (27%). As of December 2018, 40% of cards issued to people receiving Ontario Works had not yet been used.

We urge you to implement all six considerations in the report and continue to monitor implementation so that everyone who qualifies can access discounted fares.

Sincerely,

Shelagh Pizey-Allen
Executive Director, TTCriders

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