

City Council**Notice of Motion**

MM10.7	ACTION			Ward: All
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Exploring Options for Affordable Toronto Transit Commission Fares for Post-Secondary Students - by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Toronto Transit Commission Board to explore options for discounted post-secondary student single-fare and monthly passes that take into account Provincial changes to university and college fee systems, and report back in the 2020 Budget process on revisions to the system.

Summary

Recent legislative changes by the Provincial government have made it so that the current and recently proposed discounted monthly pass for post-secondary students (U-Pass) cannot exist under the new ancillary fee framework (commonly referred to as the “Student Choice Initiative”), since the Toronto Transit Commission priced it as a mandatory-cost program (organized via student unions at each respective institution). This leaves thousands of university and college students without an affordable transit option and requires new solutions for discounted student fares.

The cost of Toronto Transit Commission fares on a student’s monthly budget can be prohibitively expensive. Given the recent cuts to OSAP this can consume a significant portion of a student’s budget, with university tuition alone hovering around \$7000-8000 for domestic students and \$38,000 for international students. (This does not include deregulated programs, like Computer Science or Engineering, which can exceed \$14,000, or Law School which can exceed \$25,000-30,000 depending on the school).

Furthermore, it makes sense to review how best to make transit affordable for more students, since the U-Pass did not benefit all students in Toronto. The U-Pass fare program required a successful referendum in favour of the payment of additional mandatory fees, administered by an institution’s student union. Students within unions who did not vote in favour would not have been eligible for the U-Pass.

Unlike seniors and youth ages 13 to 19, students over the age of 19 are not eligible for discounted single Toronto Transit Commission fares. While university and college students who are enrolled full-time could receive a discount through the existing Post-Secondary Metropass, it is too expensive for many students. According to the U-Pass Policy Framework by the Toronto Transit Commission, the Post-Secondary Metropass price is equivalent to 39 trips per month at the adult fare. Students at Toronto education institutions most likely to use the Toronto Transit Commission have an average trip rate of 30 trips per month, and thus would not benefit from the discount (unless they are using it for other reasons, such as work, entertainment, or other life needs).

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM10.7