



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee
From: Cathryn Volkering Carlile
 General Manager, Community Services
Re: **Metro Vancouver Homeless Transit Plan**

Date: December 15, 2014
File: 08-4057-01/2014-Vol
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Staff Recommendation

1. That a letter be sent to TransLink requesting that the feasibility of the recommendations put forward by the Transit Working Group, cited in this report, to improve transit services for people living in extreme poverty, be explored; and
2. That a copy of that letter be sent to BC MLAs.

Cathryn Volkering Carlile
 General Manager, Community Services
 (604-276-4068)

Att. 1

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO: Transportation	CONCURRENCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO/DEPUTY

Staff Report

Origin

The purpose of this report is to respond to the Richmond Poverty Response Committee's request (Attachment 1) to the City of Richmond to consider endorsing the Regional Transit Working Group's call for a Metro Vancouver Homeless Transit Plan.

Analysis

The Transit Working Group (TWG) is proposing three immediate actions to improve transit services for people living in extreme poverty, including:

- Providing a bulk fare purchase system for shelter providers;
- Developing a mechanism for fare evasion fines to be waived, when extreme poverty can be confirmed; and
- Creating a Metro Vancouver Homeless Transit Plan.

TransLink Staff has informed City staff that their organization commits to continuing dialogue with the TWG about a Transit Plan. However, they require mechanisms in the endorsed plan to respond to cost recovery of lost revenue. Currently, the Province covers the costs of lost TransLink revenue from the fare saver program for low-income individuals. To date, the Province has not committed to a similar arrangement for the transition to the Compass Card system.

Overall, the need for a Metro Vancouver Homeless Transit Plan has been endorsed widely by community homeless task forces and service agencies that work directly with homeless individuals throughout the Lower Mainland. The Richmond Homelessness Coalition (RHC) supports TWG's efforts and positive advancements on this issue. The RHC executive continues to provide updates and information about the on-going consultation process to its members, including representatives from the Richmond Poverty Response Committee.

Further, the RHC has identified its core purpose as a community planning table rather than a political advocacy group. Due to the positive advancements by the TWG, the RHC has arrived at a consensus decision to not formally pursue a request to the City to endorse this issue at this time.

The City Councils in Vancouver, Surrey and New Westminster have endorsed the creation of a Homeless Transit Plan. Also, the North Shore Professionals have recently added their name to the growing list of endorsements to create a Regional Homeless Transit Plan.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Due to the fact that TransLink is actively engaged in dialogue with TWG about the development of a plan, staff recommend that a letter be sent to TransLink requesting the feasibility of the recommendations put forward by the TWG to be explored. Continued updates about the TWG process will be provided at the Richmond Homelessness Coalition meetings to its members. Staff will also continue to monitor and provide updates to Council about the outcomes of this process.



John Foster, MCIP, RPP
Manager, Community Social Development
(604-247-4941)

JF:dkb

Att.1: Richmond Poverty Response Committee correspondence



Richmond
Poverty
Response
Committee

July 25, 2014

01-01-01-01-01-01

TO: MAYOR & EACH COUNCILLOR			
FROM: CITY CLERK'S OFFICE		DW	
		NJ	
		DB	
		✓ HC	

*re John Foster
Victor Wai
Cathy Deville
Joe Erceg*

City of Richmond
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC
V6Y 2C1

Dear Mayor and Councillors:

Re: Need for Metro Vancouver Homeless Transit Plan

I am writing on behalf of the Richmond Poverty Response Committee concerning the above noted issue. In 2013 Surrey City Council endorsed the need for a Metro Vancouver Homeless Transit Plan. Recently the City of Vancouver joined the call for a plan. We are asking the City of Richmond to do the same thing.

The request for support of the plan came from the Regional Transit Working Group. They formed in 2013 and they state that: "People who are homeless are destitute and frequently have no way to use transit due to the cost. Currently a number of people are riding skytrain without paying, but the fine risk has increased significantly. Many major cities around North America have a homeless transit plan, and we are interested in creating one for Metro Vancouver." More information can be found at: <http://vucewa.ca/transit-working-group/>

These City Councils decided to:

1. Call on TransLink to establish a task force with representation of provincial ministries responsible for public transit, health and housing, and the Regional Transit Working group, with the purpose of developing a Regional Homeless Transit Plan that will make the system accessible to homeless people while minimizing costs to TransLink, and;
2. Request that TransLink include a reduced fare option for individuals on income assistance along the lines of those now in place for persons with disabilities and low income seniors.

It is our view that public transit is essential to moving people out of homelessness by providing better access to shelters, health services, employment, training and safe and affordable housing.

The Richmond Poverty Response Committee looks forward to your positive response to this request. Should you require more information please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

De Whalen, Chair

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JUL 30 2014

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c/o Richmond Food Bank Society, 100-5800 Cedarbridge Way, Richmond V6X 2A7
Tel. 604-205-4700 info@richmondprc.org