Delegation to Richmond City Council February 25, 2019

My name is Phil Dunham and I live in Steveston. Don Creamer and I are speaking on behalf of the Richmond Poverty Response Committee or PRC.

We are here to ask City Council to approve the **#All On Board transit campaign** resolution tonight, which is to endorse the campaign and advocate to the Mayors' Council and the BC government to implement the following improvements to the transit fare system:

- Free transit for 0-18 years
- Sliding scale fares for low-income individuals
- Changes to Translink fines program

Free transit for children and youth will 'raise-a-rider' and develop enthusiastic transit users over time.

Sliding scale fares will give disadvantaged residents access to public amenities that we all pay for.

And changes to the transit fines programs can mean local non-profits won't have to use grant funds to pay their clients' fines.

New Westminster, Port Moody and Vancouver have all approved resolutions in support of #AllOnBoard.

The campaign is now pushing forward in Burnaby, North Vancouver, Port Coquitlam, Delta and White Rock. Richmond could be next!

Now Don Creamer will speak on his experience with fines.

Thank you,

Phil Dunham
On behalf of
Richmond PRC

cc. De Whalen,
Chair, Richmond PRC
H 13631 Blundell Road
Richmond V6W1B6
C 604.230.3158

City of Richmond
Notice of Motion: #AllOnBoard Campaign

WHEREAS the City of Richmond has recognized and has demonstrated over the past years its commitment to the health and well-being of its residents, and lack of transportation is one of the most common reasons for missing medical appointments and a significant barrier to social inclusion and labour market inclusion for low income adults and youth; and

WHEREAS the #AllOnBoard campaign, concerned agencies in Vancouver and through-out Metro Vancouver, and directly impacted youth and adult community members have brought to the attention of the City of Richmond the direct harm that is brought to them through the bad credit ratings they develop due to fare evasion ticketing. Those living below the poverty line have brought forward that they cannot afford to pay the $173 fines received individually, or the resulting accrued 'TransLink debt' from many unpaid fines; and

WHEREAS the City of Richmond and other municipalities contribute to charities and non-profits which then out of necessity subsidize transit tickets for those who cannot afford to access crucial social services provided by the City of Richmond and other municipalities, and sometimes pay off 'TransLink debt' and fare evasion fines to TransLink and external collection agencies;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Richmond endorse the #AllOnBoard Campaign; the City write a letter to the TransLink Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation, the Board of Directors of TransLink, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction asking TransLink to work with the provincial government to finalize and secure funding, and develop a plan that will provide free public transit for minors (aged 0-18), and reduced price transit based on a sliding scale using the Market Basket Measure for all low-income people regardless of their demographic profile as soon as possible; and

THAT the City write a separate letter to the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation asking them to 1) require TransLink adopt a poverty reduction/equity mandate in order to address the outstanding issue of lack of affordability measures to ensure those who need public transit the most can access the essential service, and 2) to request the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation and TransLink immediately and without delay amend existing by-laws and cease ticketing all minors for fare evasion as the first step towards the full implementation of free transit for children and youth 0-18, unlink ICBC from fare evasion for youth and adults, and introduce options, including allowing low-income adults to access community service as an alternative to the financial penalty of a fare evasion ticket; and lower the ticket price substantially; and

THAT the resolution regarding support for the #AllOnBoard Campaign be forwarded for consideration at the 2019 Lower Mainland Government Management Association of BC (LMGMA) convention and subsequent Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) convention

AND THAT the #AllOnBoard forthcoming research report containing evidence and testimonies in support of the #AllonBoard Campaign be included in the submission to the LMGMA once available.

Research conducted by Peter Greenwell

Fare Evasion Fines and Enforcement: TriMet, Portland and King County Metro Transit, Seattle
CONFIDENTIAL

Summary

In Metro Vancouver, we took fare evasion fines and enforcement out of the court system in 2012, through amendments to the South Coast Transportation Authority Act. The non-court based alternative enforcement mechanisms included: non-renewal of drivers' licenses, referral to debt collectors, and barring from the transit system. In 2016 the Province of Alberta fare evasion and jay walking fines were also removed from the criminal system. In 2015, in Alberta, a tragic situation occurred when Barry Stewart chose five days in jail instead of paying $287 in fare evasion and jay walking tickets[1] and then died in remand. In 2018 both TriMet (Portland) and King County Metro Transit (Seattle)[2] decriminalized fare evasion. Importantly these two transit systems are also making significant changes to the level of fare evasion fines and the process and objectives of the enforcement mechanisms being implemented.

After the completion of audits[3] on their fare evasion citation programs, considering effectiveness and cost-recovery, both TriMet and King County Metro Transit concluded their existing fare evasion and enforcement procedures were not cost-effective and, in addition, were punitive to particular population groups. The King County Audit said Metro Transit "cannot determine whether its model of fare enforcement makes sense, in terms of costs and outcomes, or identify ways to improve it." Both transit systems elected to establish, with extensive community discussions and research of approaches in other USA cities, programs that had multiple resolution options in a non-court based framework. Portland and Seattle, working under State and County policies on equity and social justice, are implementing reforms that TransLink is not currently considering. TriMet and Metro Transit's approaches are discussed below.

TriMet, Portland

Portland's regional transit system[4], TriMet, has a seven member Board of Directors that is appointment by the Governor of Oregon. The General Manager answers to the Board of Directors. There is a necessary but indirect relationship with City of Portland and Tri-County governments. TriMet's electronic card is called the HOP Fastpass. Since 2010, TriMet has been going through a process of simplifying their fare structure, first by ending their zone system, and then re-setting fare levels at the same level for Honored Citizens (seniors, disabled and veterans) and youth.

TriMet issues approximately 20,000 fare evasion tickets per year[5]. The agency completes an annual fare evasion survey; and in 2017 the estimated fare evasion rate was 13.1 percent. This percentage is high compared with other transit systems and represented a challenge for TriMet fare enforcement.

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[1] News article here: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/alberta-bill-proposes-end-to-arrests-for-transit-fare-jaywalking-scofflaws-1.3534395

[2] Washington DC Council voted to support the *Fare Evasion Decriminalization Act 2018*, November 13, 2018 http://lims.dccouncil.us/Download/38590/B22-0408-CommitteeReport1.pdf

[3] Portland had a third-party independent audit completed, and Seattle's was an internal audit

[4] TriMet operates in three different counties and numerous cities: https://trimet.org/pdfs/taxinfo/trimetdistrictboundary.pdf

[5] In a September, 2018 Appellate Court decision, not specifically related to fare evasion, but deemed to be applicable, the issue of checking for fares evasion without probably cause, was deemed unconstitutional, as the process lacked reasonable suspicion.

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Research conducted by Peter Greenwell

Repeat violations (i.e. getting caught with either no fare or improper fare more than once in the two years of data) comprise 25.5% of all enforcement incidents.

In 2017 TriMet had a third-party independent review conducted which revealed a growing fare evasion rate, as well as a need for a fare enforcement regime that included both opportunities to make consequences less punitive, while maintaining an effective incentive for riders to pay fares. The independent review considered the fare enforcement practices used by other transit systems including Dallas, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York, Phoenix, Buffalo, and San Francisco.

Beginning July 1, 2018 TriMet rolled out, in conjunction with the implementation of a low-income fare program, a revised fare evasion enforcement plan. TriMet's previous fine was similar to TransLink's fare evasion ticket, with a $175 fine per infraction. State legislation was enacted to allow TriMet to hold fare evasion citations for 90 days[6], to allow for alternative dispute resolution, before the citation was registered with the Court. The new system is a hybrid system that provides adults, riding without a valid fare, with three options:
1. Fine
2. Community service
3. Enrollment in the Low income/Honored Citizen program

If completed within 90 days, the citation is not referred to the Court system. If it is not resolved, then it continues to be referred to Court.[7] Currently, citations are issued on paper. TriMet is in the final stages of testing the filing of electronic citations. Currently, all citations are tracked in a database, but that information is manually entered from the citation form to a database.

It should be noted an appeal process, regarding proof of payment only, is available for citations issued for non-payment. Essentially a passenger is given a second chance to produce proof of payment (for example, when a monthly employee pass was paid for but forgotten and not shown at the time of the citation). There is no appeal for extenuating circumstances. If the citation is resolved within the 90 days, then administratively it is referred to the Court system.

Tiered fines
There were extensive discussions before fine levels were determined, to find a balance between effective deterrence without being punitive. This discussion was informed by empirical research undertaken by Dr. Brian Renauer, Criminal Justice Policy Research Institute, Portland State University, on

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TriMet will modifying their fare checking process. The issue does not come up with non-police security. Full report here:
https://trimet.org/meetings/board/pdfs/2018-11-14/ord-351.pdf

[6] The violation statute (ORS 153.054) used to say that the citing officer "shall cause" the citation to be delivered to the court. Oregon changed the statute so now it says that except as provided in ORS 267.153 (which is where the administrative fine option is outlined). So TriMet has the clear authority to not file until after 90 days, and not file at all if the person resolved administratively. *Knight versus Spokane*, Washington State Court ruling from the 1970's, a ticket must be served within 3 days of issuance (this addressed graft issue with officers 'issuing' tickets, but paid to them directly, and then not filed with Court).
[7] Los Angeles opted for an completely internal system for adjudicating citations, without referral to court system, and has had difficulties with compliance enforcement

Research conducted by Peter Greenwell

compliance results and efficacy of 'get tough policies.' The fine structure approved is tiered[8] based on the number of fare evasion violations:[9]

- o First offense: $75
- o Second offense: $100
- o Third offense: $150
- o Fourth offense and beyond: $175 (no reduction options available)

Community Service

TriMet has developed relationships with five larger agencies that already had an established relationship with the Court system, for the completion of community service hours, see list here: https://trimet.org/citation/communityservice/. A person that receives a citation must register with one of the five agencies, complete the required hours, and have the agency report back to TriMet within 90 days of the citation being issued, to avoid a referral of the citation to the Court system. An adult fare evader may have the option to complete community service in lieu of a fine:

- o First offense: 4 hours ($18.75/hour in-kind service)
- o Second offense: 7 hours ($14.28/hour in-kind service)
- o Third offense: 12 hours ($12.50/hour in-kind service)
- o Fourth offense and beyond: 15 hours ($11.66/hour in-kind service)

Low income/Honored Citizen Program enrollment

TriMet will waive the fare evasion citation if an adult rider meets ALL of the following criteria:

- o Eligible for, but not enrolled in, TriMet's low income fare program (July 2018) or the agency's Honored Citizen program, https://trimet.org/citation/programs/
- o Successfully enroll in the low income or Honored Citizen program during the 90-day stay period.
- o Load a minimum of $10 on their reloadable HOP Fastpass™ fare card during the 90-day stay period.

Qualification for the Honored Citizen HOP is handled through verification by third parties (non-profit agencies and other government departments/agencies). It is a two year qualification period, the same as Seattle's Metro Transit. A person must go to the TriMet's downtown ticket centre with the verification, to have their photo taken, and have a HOP card printed for them at that time. Resolution of a ticket through these options is only available to adults for fare evasion citations, and not when other violations (such as behavior) of the TriMet Code have been committed.

King County Metro Transit, Seattle

Fare enforcement on King County Metro Transit[10] started in 2010. Currently, the RapidRide lines are the only bus lines in the Metro Transit system with fare enforcement[11]. On the regular buses, much like in

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[8] Calgary Transit also has a tiered fine system, but at much higher rates, $250 (1st fine), $500 (2nd) and $750 (3rd)

[9] If paid during the 90-day stay period

[10] Metro Transit has 1/3 of the County workforce, and is being elevated from a Division of the Transportation Department, to its own department.

[11] Starting March, 2019 no Metro Transit busses will run through the downtown transit tunnel, Sound Transit light rail only. Most busses will be rerouted onto the 3rd Street transit corridor, where all busses, including non-RapidRide, will be subject to proof of payment enforcement

Research conducted by Peter Greenwell

Metro Vancouver, operators may ask for proof of payment, but do not enforce payment and do not issue tickets for fare evasion[12].

King County Metro Transit contracts with Securitas, the same private company used by Sound Transit, for fare enforcement officers. Sound Transit runs the regional light rail system. Metro Transit adopted the same fare enforcement practices used on Sound Transit. Metro Transit operates in a different policy environment than TransLink; they have their own *Service Guidelines* – similar to TransLink's *10-Year Vision* – and in addition they operate within the *King County 2016-2022 Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan*, which outlines the need to consider the equity impacts of County services. Metro Vancouver's *Metro 2040,* does not have explicit social equity or social sustainability goals.

In 2016 the Securitas enforcement officers checked almost 300,000 passengers, or about 1.4 percent of RapidRide ridership. Of those 300,000 checks, officers encountered 9,352 instances where riders could not show proof of payment. Depending on the number of times a person has been encountered by officers without valid proof of payment or deceitful behavior, officers can:
- issue a verbal warning
- a $124 fine[13], or
- recommend a misdemeanor to Metro Transit Police (adults only)

Almost 19,000 people received penalties between 2015 and 2017. Of those people, 99 individuals (0.5 percent) received a total of 1,589 penalties or six percent of all penalties in this time period. One person received 53 penalties over two years. The majority of this group are people of color, people who experienced housing instability during this time, or both. An Auditor's report on the existing fare evasion system found that about 10% of people given warnings were homeless or experiencing housing instability, 25% of citations were given to this group of people, and nearly 30% of misdemeanors were to this category of people[14].

The table below details the approximate cost of the past fare evasion ticket system for various activities[15].

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[12] Practice in Seattle, a bus operator might provide a transfer to a non-paying person, so that if a fare inspector is on the bus, the rider will have 'proof of payment' – to prevent situation where the rider says the bus driver let me on, but not having proof.
[13] Under State Law, Theft in 3rd Degree (theft of services) which is a criminal gross misdemeanor, as there is a real value being stolen, and could be referred to the County Prosecutor
[14] During interviews, officers stated they try to use their discretion in enforcement with individuals they encounter frequently or who may be experiencing housing instability, but their tools were limited and their primary task is fare evasion enforcement.
[15] From staff report to King County Executive, September 8, 2018

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Research conducted by Peter Greenwell

RapidRide fare enforcement costs on per-unit basis for 2016.
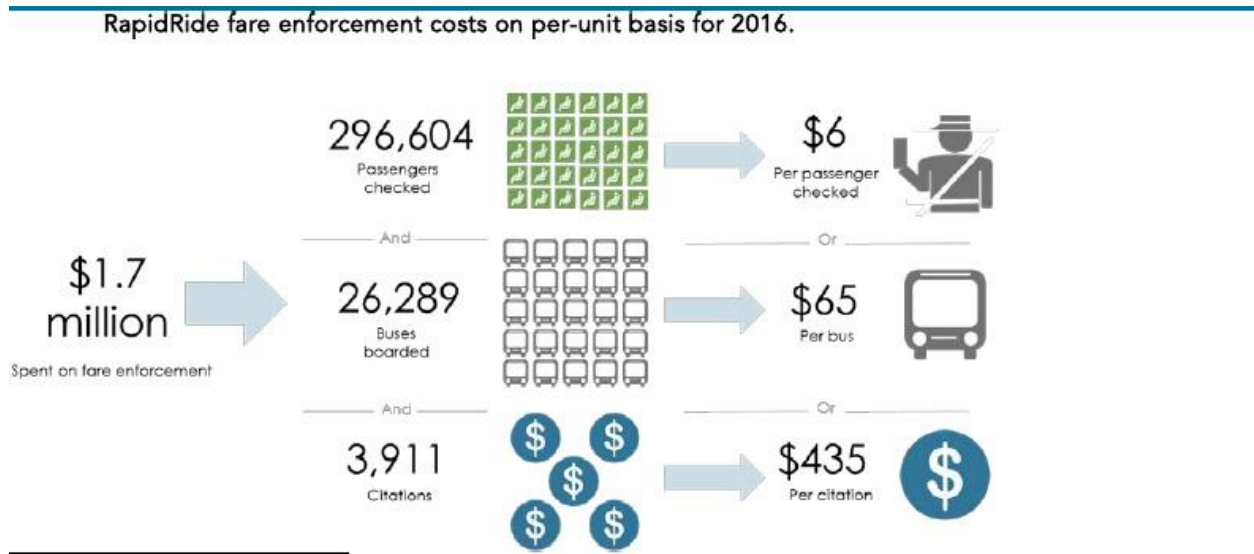
According to the King County Executive, the past process was intended to provide a deterrent to fare evasion, however, a King County Auditor's Office report found that most infractions went unresolved.

The District Court estimated that processing fare evasion tickets cost more than $343,760 in staff time in 2016, with only $4,338—about 1.3 percent— recovered in payments to the county. The District Court began charging Transit for the remainder of its ticket processing costs. With Metro Transit expanding fare enforcement to additional RapidRide lines, these costs were expected to increase. By 2025 Metro Transit has plans to increase the RapidRide bus lines from six lines to 19 lines, and 26 lines by 2040.

In early 2017 there was an internal review of fare enforcement. The fare evasion citation is a civil infraction such as a red light infraction. Reviewed infractions to look for trends with race, geography and looked at ways to address/prevent (for example, parking a police vehicle near a transit stop with frequent evasion boarding). Officers rotate through the system so everyone should have the same ticketing profile, couldn't find any statistically significant trends amongst the officers. The position of Quality Assurance Supervisor was created, to review all complaints, uses of force and look for any undesirable trends.

On September 8, 2018 the King County Council approved Ordinance 2018-0377 to amend the *King County Code*, to replace the existing infraction system for fare evasion on RapidRide buses and replace it with an alternative resolution process. The Ordinance directs the creation of an internal Metro Transit process, where customers will have several options for resolution of any fare violation. The intent is to provide offenders with an option to resolve the citation, outside of court, and not face debt collection and subsequent penalties. The new system will allow for several options for resolution—an opportunity to mitigate a fine by early payment, allow for community service in lieu of a fine, or provide for the ability to administratively cancel a fine. Estimated that January, 2019 will be when new tickets will be issued.[16]

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[16] In the transition period Metro Transit has stopped referring adult citations to prosecutor (youth citations have not been referred for two years with an additional warning given before ticketing). Currently doing a Title 6 check (compliance with the Civil Rights Act), which is why the program is likely not in place until January, 2019.

Research conducted by Peter Greenwell

The following transit fare evasion penalties and resolution for use by Metro King County Transit on the RapidRide busses have every step based on 'a fresh start.' Two people have been hired to administer the program, one person is responsible for outreach – job is to connect with violators and explain/work through the prevention and/or resolution steps. The proposed fines and resolutions are:

$50 Infraction
WITHIN 30 DAYS
- Paying infraction = fine halved

WITHIN 90 DAYS (TBD)
- LIFT enrollment the fine is waived
- 4 hours Community Service the fine is waived. On the back of the infraction form is a certification form to be filled out and signed by the agency where hours completed, a self-addressed stamped envelope is provided.
- Add $25 stored value to ORCA Lift the fine is waived (limited to once per year)
- Add $50 to ORCA the fine is waived (limited to once per year)
- Appealed to
    - 1st – Metro Adjudicator[17]
    - 2nd – Mitigation Panel[18]

IF UNRESOLVED AFTER 90 DAYS
The ticketed person's name would be added to the "Pending Suspension" list. The next failure to pay, results in a 30 day suspension per unresolved infraction. After 30 days, the infraction is considered to be resolved. The link that is maintained to the Court system[19] is that non-payment of a fare during a suspension could have transit police either issue a ticket for criminal trespass, ask the rider to deboard the bus (under the County Code's *RideRight* can have civil or criminal charges depending on infraction) or take the person to jail. A 30 day suspension can be issued anytime during the 365 days.

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[17] The new position of Metro Adjudicator, within Transit Security, was created with the goal of engaging people in violation with resolution options.

[18] The final step is an appeal to the Mitigation Panel (an existing process used for suspensions). The Mitigation Panel has five members representing: Transit Security, Operations, Diversity, Customer Service and ParaTransit.

[19] Los Angeles Metro Transit brought both fare evasion/enforcement and parking tickets in-house: https://www.metro.net/about/transit-court/, including an inability to pay waiver, http://media.metro.net/about_us/transit_court/images/waiver_transitcourt_declaration_inability_to_pay.pdf

Affordable Transit Pass Programs for Low Income Individuals: Options and Recommendations for the City of Winnipeg

Markus Beveridge – Practicum Student

July 22, 2016

Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

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INTRODUCTION

Accessible and affordable transportation for low-income individuals and families has been demonstrated to create economic and social benefits for not only those experiencing low income, but for society as a whole. A majority of Canadian cities have either fully implemented, or are piloting, affordable public transit passes for people living in low-income. Winnipeg currently has discount pass options for seniors and in September, 2016, will be implementing a UPASS program for students. These two discount programs recognize that cities can play an important role in meeting the transportation needs of people with fixed or lower incomes.

Winnipeg considered implementing an affordable transit pass (ATP) program in 2010. At the time, Transit Finance Manager Carrie Erickson wrote, "a transit system that is accessible to all Winnipeggers is an important contributor to employment and economic opportunity" (Kives, 2010). On March 24, 2010, Winnipeg City Council voted in favour of a motion to consider low income and off-peak passes, "after the implementation of Winnipeg Transit's Fare Collection System Update Project to provide for the review and development of intergovernmental partnerships as well as technical, financial, and administrative support systems that may be necessary" (City of Winnipeg, 2010).

There are various types of affordable transit initiatives being employed in Canada and internationally. The two primary reasons that these are implemented are to increase public transit use and/or to make transit more affordable (Serebrisky et al., 2009). This report is concerned with the latter, focusing especially on initiatives targeted at helping low-income individuals and families. The current types of programs being used include indirectly and directly targeted discounts. Indirect programs such as family passes and off-peak passes are universal, but operate under the implicit assumption that these will be utilized most by those with low incomes. Direct programs have eligibility restricted to those with low incomes, such as reduced transit tickets and reduced monthly passes. Some jurisdictions even have free transit, which may be either universal or needs based.

Family passes, off-peak passes, and reduced ticket programs have undergone little research, but are generally considered impractical due to their significant limitations (Hardman, 2015; Taylor, 2014; Dempster, 2009). It is not advised that these be implemented as standalone programs, although they could perhaps be used to supplement other affordability initiatives. Universal system-wide free transit models are the theoretical ideal, but are typically considered unfeasible for a city with the size and dispersion of Winnipeg (Perone & Volinski, 2003; Volinski, 2012). Needs based free transit could work since it is essentially a subsidy program with a very deep discount, although there was no available research that could be found on such a model. As such, this report will focus on reduced cost monthly passes. These are the most common transit initiatives currently used in Canada to benefit those with low incomes, and they are steadily increasing in number across the nation.

METHODOLOGY & STRUCTURE

Nineteen national affordable transit pass (ATP) programs were found and are each briefly profiled in Appendix A. Fourteen of them are permanent and five are pilots. Fifteen of the programs are municipal (seven with provincial funding and eight without), three are regional, and one is provincial. Of the nineteen ATP programs, nine of them are analyzed in more depth below. Eight of these are permanent and one is a pilot; six are municipal (three with provincial

funding, three without) and three are regional. A review of eight international programs has also been very recently conducted by Toronto Public Health (2015) and is therefore not repeated in this report, but can be found in the list of references.
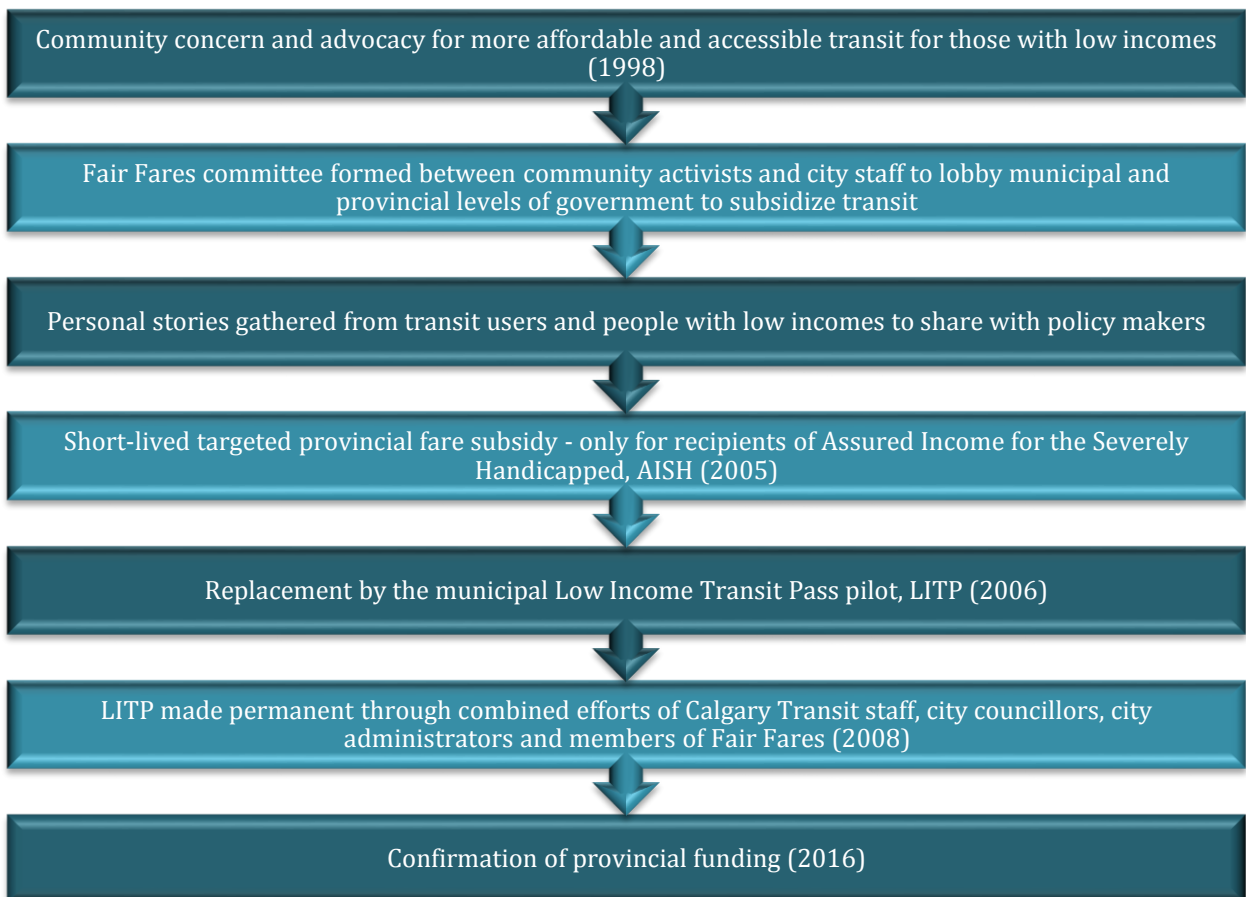
This paper reviews ATP program specifics in the following jurisdictions: City of Calgary, Region of Waterloo, Region of York, Region of Halton, City of Hamilton, City of Windsor, City of Kingston, City of Guelph, and City of Saskatoon. The establishment, funding, operation, challenges encountered, successful strategies, and impact are examined for each (much of which is adapted/updated from a 2012 review conducted by Dempster and Tucs for the City of Toronto). The paper then culminates in a final summary and comparison of all the programs profiled, out of which come brief options and recommendations for the City of Winnipeg.

Note: This review is not wholly comprehensive, it is comprised of all the information that was publicly available at the time of writing; it is meant to give a preliminary understanding of the types of programs already being implemented and a guide to what can be learned from them. For a list of all information sources used for each jurisdiction see Appendix B.

PROFILES: SELECTED CANADIAN ATP PROGRAMS

1. CITY OF CALGARY

1.1 Establishment

Community concern and advocacy for more affordable and accessible transit for those with low incomes (1998)

⬇

Fair Fares committee formed between community activists and city staff to lobby municipal and provincial levels of government to subsidize transit

⬇

Personal stories gathered from transit users and people with low incomes to share with policy makers

⬇

Short-lived targeted provincial fare subsidy - only for recipients of Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped, AISH (2005)

⬇

Replacement by the municipal Low Income Transit Pass pilot, LITP (2006)

⬇

LITP made permanent through combined efforts of Calgary Transit staff, city councillors, city administrators and members of Fair Fares (2008)

⬇

Confirmation of provincial funding (2016)

1.2 Funding

For the first years of operation the cost of the LITP program was covered by an anticipated surplus in the Calgary Transit budget. During this time, continuation of the program

was reliant on a sustained surplus. When the LITP program was approved as an permanent program in 2008, the municipal tax levy began to cover costs through an allotment to Calgary Transit. The city covered the full $20 million per year costs until 2016 when the Government of Alberta confirmed $4.5 million of yearly provincial funding to help supplement the program.

1.3 Operation

Calgary Transit operates the program. Applications for the LITP are accepted at the main transit office. Registration is open to all residents of Calgary 18-64 years old who meet the low-income criteria. With their application, registrants must provide an Income Tax Notice of Assessment (NOA) for all family members 18 years or older in the household. Applicants who are recipients of AISH can provide a Health Benefits stub or a current copy of an official letter stating their eligibility. Patrons who meet the criteria receive a confirmation letter, which they may then use to purchase a pass at any one of four locations. To reduce risk of fraud, registrants' names are maintained in a database, LITP passes have patrons' names on them and are non-transferable, and patrons must reapply annually. The passes were initially priced at just under half the regular adult pass (44%), with eligibility available to those falling below 75% of the before-tax Low Income Cut-Off (LICO). Eligibility has since increased to 100% of before-tax LICO in 2014, and the recent provincial funding has been touted as an opportunity to implement a sliding scale up to 130% of the LICO.

1.4 Challenges Encountered
- Logistical: establishing a benchmark for eligibility
- Financial: determining how the city's cost would vary with different criteria and different pass prices
- Administrative: finding ways to mitigate potential for fraud while still remaining non-stigmatizing and easily accessible

1.5 Successful Strategies
- Long-term community advocacy and involvement; the Fair Fares group continues to play a role in an advisory capacity
- Personal stories from people with low incomes helped councillors and staff appreciate the importance of the program and the barriers that regular prices create
- Studies conducted to assess costs (how many people would switch to the new pass) and appropriate fees (from the perspective of potential clients)

1.6 Impact

In 2007, the City and Fair Fares collaborated to assess the program impacts. The responses were strongly positive.
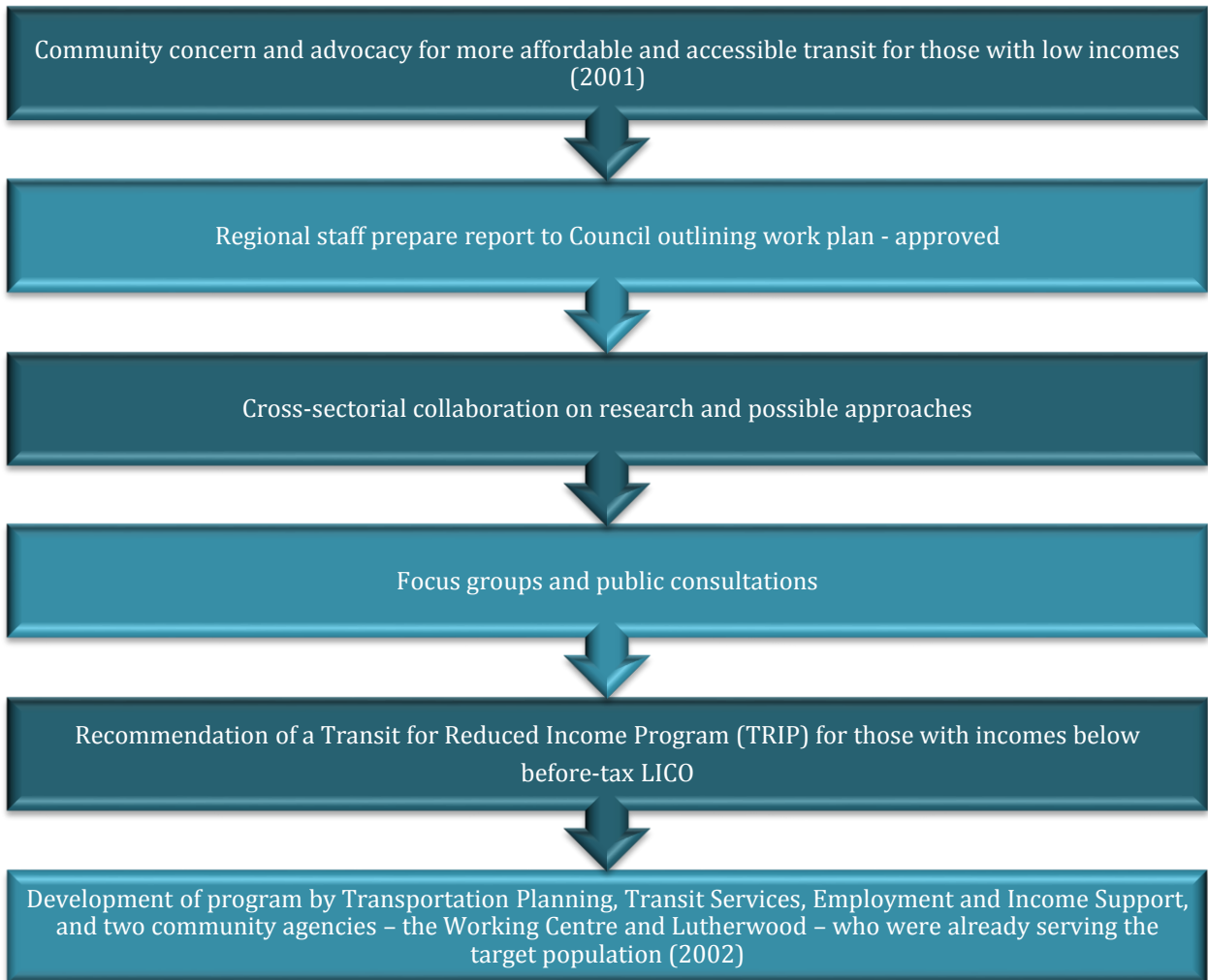
Positive	Negative
•99% of respondents agreed that the pass was useful to them •97% agreed that life was better with a pass •55% pointed to financial benefits, 35% to increased mobility, 8% to general assistance, and 5% to reduced stress •90% had more money to buy things, 62% visited family and friends more often, 60% went to medical appointments more often, 59% were able to keep a job, 55% took more training/education classes, 49% found employment/better employment, and 48% volunteered more often	•56% of respondents had previously bought a regular pass, 25% had purchased books of tickets, and new patrons only accounted for about 10%

2. REGION OF WATERLOO

2.1 Establishment

Community concern and advocacy for more affordable and accessible transit for those with low incomes (2001)

Regional staff prepare report to Council outlining work plan - approved

Cross-sectorial collaboration on research and possible approaches

Focus groups and public consultations

Recommendation of a Transit for Reduced Income Program (TRIP) for those with incomes below before-tax LICO

Development of program by Transportation Planning, Transit Services, Employment and Income Support, and two community agencies – the Working Centre and Lutherwood – who were already serving the target population (2002)

2.2 Funding

TRIP funds are allocated to the Employment and Income Support department of Social Services and come from the municipal tax levy and the gas tax revenue allocated to municipalities. Payment is made to Grand River Transit based on the number of passes sold. Administration costs are covered by: Region of Waterloo's Employment and Income Support (general administration), Transportation Planning (usage and projections), Grand River Transit (sales and marketing), and two community agencies, The Working Centre and Lutherwood (application and renewal). The total annual cost of the program in 2015 was $407,000.

2.3 Operation

The application for TRIP is an honour-based process managed by two community agencies in the region. Applicants do not necessarily need to provide proof of income, as that is left to the discretion of agency staff who regularly work with the targeted demographic and may be well acquainted with the applicants. The program is capped at 2300 patrons, and a ratio of

40% employed to 60% unemployed is sought (although the ratio is quite flexible). Registrants receive a sticker on the back of their transit identification card, after which they can buy a regular adult pass at the discounted price at any main bus terminal. The stickers are valid for one year.

The TRIP price was originally the same as the reduced rate for seniors and students. After review the discount was increased to 44%, largely due to slow uptake and the realization that it was still too expensive for many. Initially restricted to people who were employed, TRIP was also expanded to include people in receipt of OW/ODSP or with other sources of income. TRIP has an advisory committee of those involved in management and administration of the program. Meetings occur every couple of months and provide an opportunity to make necessary changes. The committee also updates TRIP operating principles and procedures every two years.

2.4 Challenges Encountered
- Finding the right formula for price versus number of passes available
- Recognizing the importance of revenue from the fare box for the transit system
- Complexity of application process
- Dealing with the success of the program (ex. long wait lists due to rapidly increased interest)

2.5 Successful Strategies
- Cross-sectorial partnerships including community partners whose work and mandates complements the program
- Consistency in committee membership
- Recognizing the importance of accessibility as well as affordability
- Avoiding stigmatization
- Raising awareness of the necessity of transportation for people with low incomes
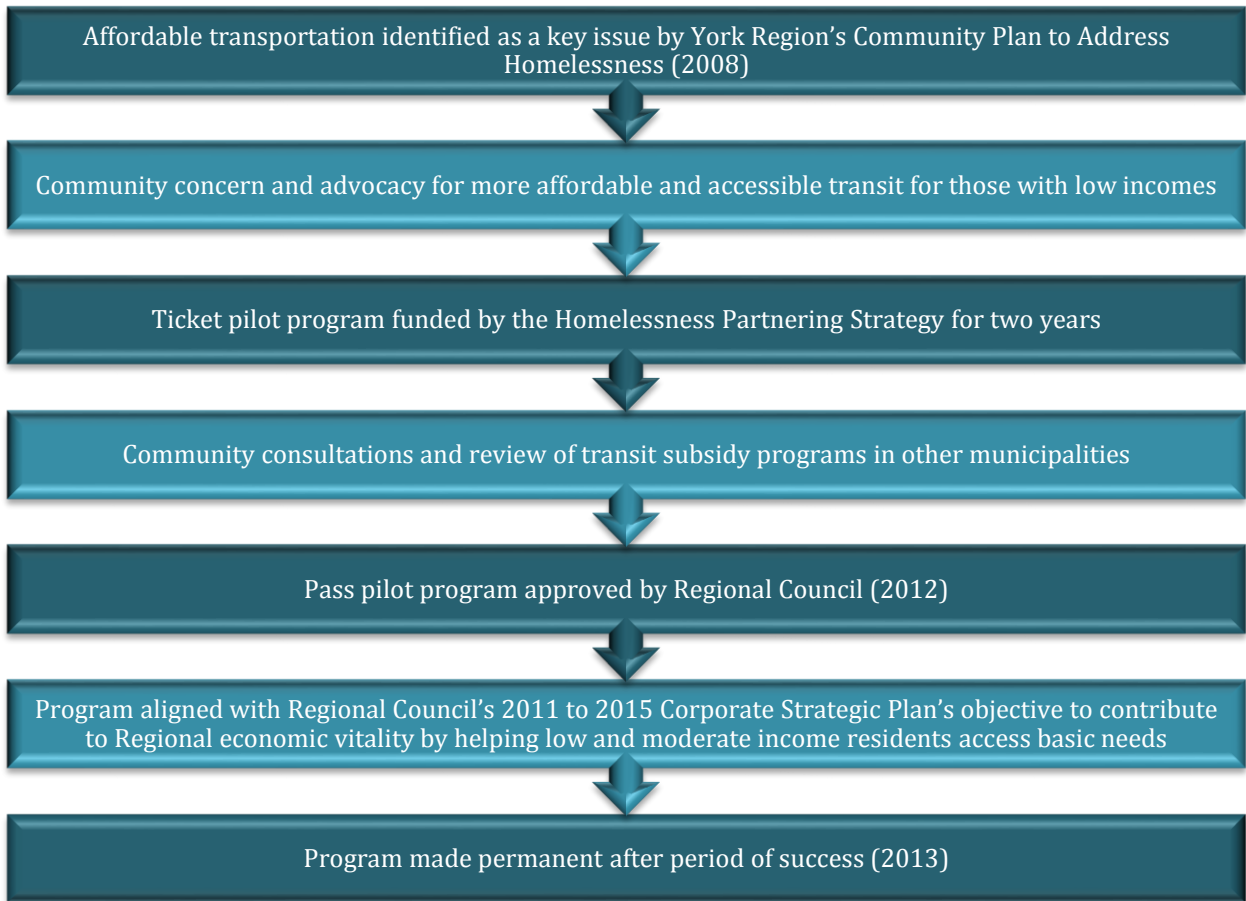
2.6 Impact
Evaluations of TRIP were undertaken in 2004 and 2013, showing that the program was well received and indicating continued benefits.

Positive	Negative	Recommendations
• Almost all respondents saw public transit as vital and 99% said access to a reduced monthly pass made a positive difference in their life • Patrons reported increased community inclusion and socialization, as well as increased access to training, volunteer, and employment • 62% of patrons purchased the TRIP pass every month • Patrons relied on the bus much more when they had a TRIP pass (96% of the time) than when they did not have a TRIP pass (41% of the time)	• Many noted that availability of passes was limited, eligibility criteria excluded many that need assistance, and transit service was not always accessible or available • The price of the reduced bus pass is still a significant amount for individuals with low income • TRIP patrons commented that the barriers they face with regard to transportation are in relation to costs (of the bus pass and rising prices), the timing of buses, and the schedules and routes being inconvenient for their travels	• Continue efforts to improve service, with particular attention to diversity and to the needs of people who rely heavily on public transit • Facilitate greater community involvement, specifically including low-income patrons in the design, planning and implementation

3. REGION OF YORK

3.1 Establishment

Affordable transportation identified as a key issue by York Region's Community Plan to Address Homelessness (2008)

⬇

Community concern and advocacy for more affordable and accessible transit for those with low incomes

⬇

Ticket pilot program funded by the Homelessness Partnering Strategy for two years

⬇

Community consultations and review of transit subsidy programs in other municipalities

⬇

Pass pilot program approved by Regional Council (2012)

⬇

Program aligned with Regional Council's 2011 to 2015 Corporate Strategic Plan's objective to contribute to Regional economic vitality by helping low and moderate income residents access basic needs

⬇

Program made permanent after period of success (2013)

3.2 Funding

The program had an initial budget of nearly $1.33 million. With the majority allocated to passes ($966,000), the remaining funds were allocated to tickets ($250,000), to administrative expenses like staff and benefits ($96,400), and to evaluation ($15,000). The budget in 2014 went down to $886,000. All the monies are paid to the Community and Health Services Department and are drawn from the York Region Social Assistance Reserve Fund, which is funded mainly through the municipal tax levy.

3.3 Operation

A working group comprised of regional staff members from the Community and Health Services Department (Social Services, Strategic Service Integration and Policy), the Transportation Services Department (Transit, Policy and Planning), and a provincial ODSP representative (York Region Office) was formed in the summer of 2011 to design program specifics. The working group identified a set of principles for the program and considered ways in which to provide support for their target group: OW/ODSP recipients with employment-related criteria.

By focusing on recipients of OW/ODSP, eligibility determination is facilitated through regular OW/ODSP case management processes. Development of a new application process was not required. Patrons are able to purchase transit passes at a 75% discount, and up to 1400 passes are available through the program. Program registrants receive six-months worth of vouchers, to be redeemed at York Transit's main office. Enrolment after six months may be renewed if the registrant has not found a job.

3.4 Challenges Encountered
- Inconsistent funding

3.5 Successful Strategies
- Alignment with municipal and provincial strategic plans: responding to the transportation needs of all residents was part of Regional Government's broader strategic plan and the Community and Health Services Department's Multi-Year Plan.

3.6 Impact
[Not available]

4. REGION OF HALTON

4.1 Program Establishment

Regional Council approved one-year pilot program in partnership with local transit authorities – Subsidized Passes for Low Income Transit, SPLIT (2011)
SPLIT communicated through print, online, and bus advertising in the Region
Program made permanent (2013)
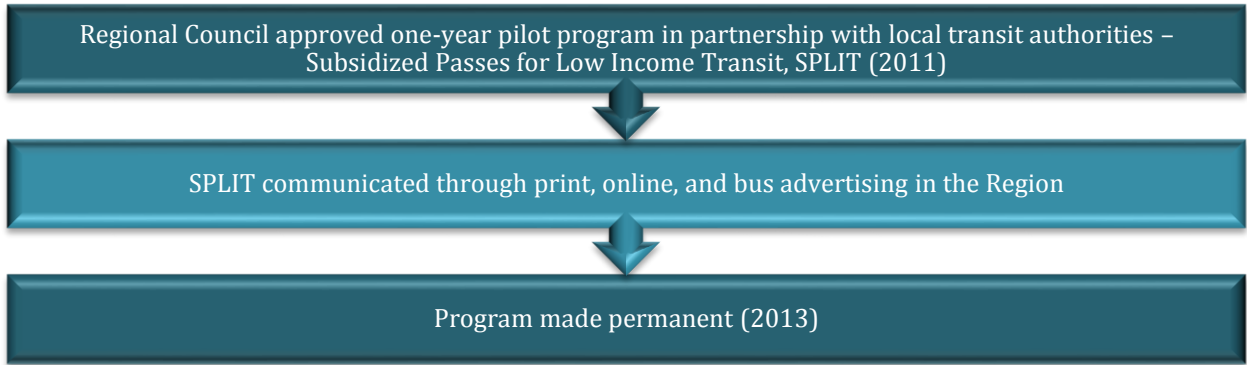
4.2 Program Funding

SPLIT is funded by regional social services but administered by the transit agencies, which have access to a database of eligible participants. Since inception the budget has more than doubled from $300,000 to $630,000 in 2014.

4.3 Program Operation

SPLIT covers 50% of monthly transit passes for seniors, students, and adults (including OW/ODSP recipients), respectively, who can demonstrate that their income is within 15% of the LICO (from most recent NOA). Individuals wishing to apply must contact the region by dialling 311 for an eligibility assessment. Upon approval, individuals can then purchase a pass from their local transit authority. Eligibility is reassessed annually.
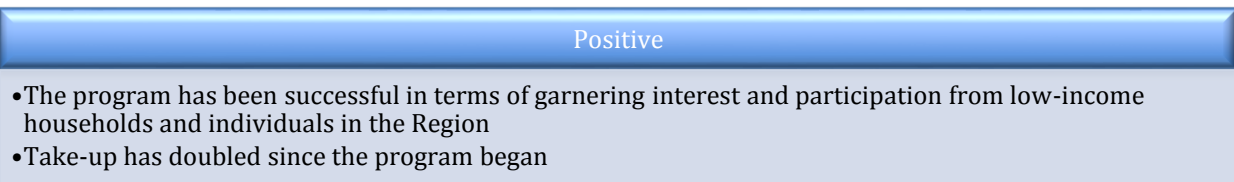
4.4 Challenges Encountered

[Not available]

4.5 Successful Strategies

- Including para-transit/handi-transit programs and services
- Wide program outreach and communication
- Including both those receiving social assistance as well as those who are not
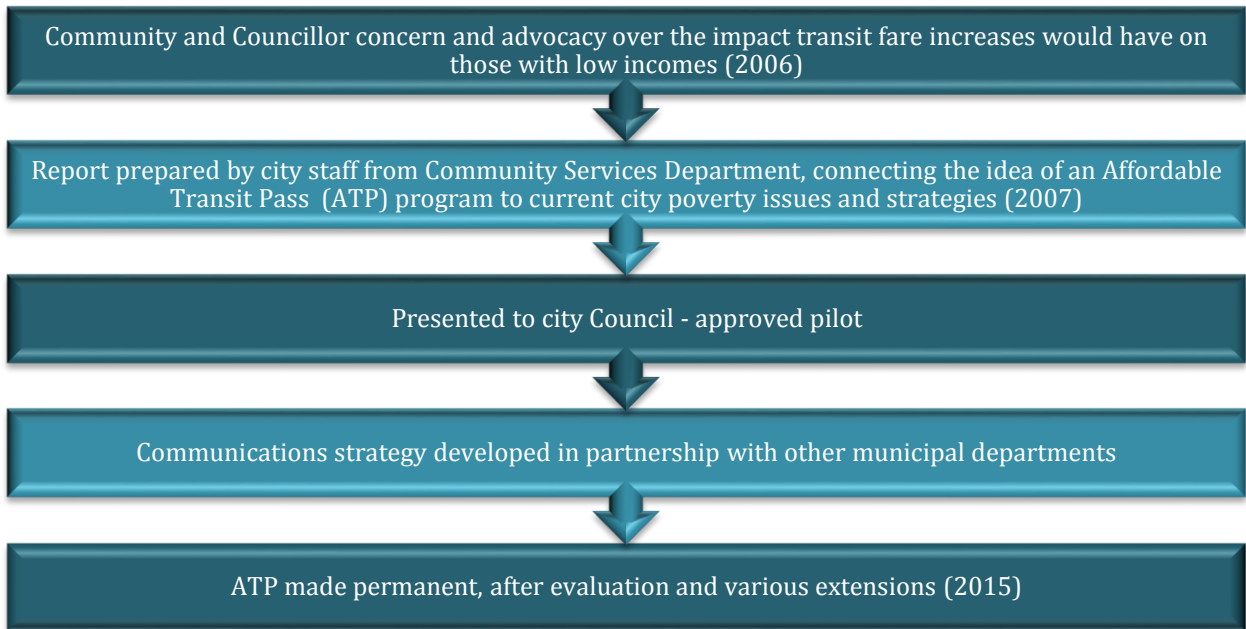- Relating the program to municipal strategic plans/directions

4.6 Impact

Upon completion of the SPLIT pilot, staff participated in a short assessment of the program.

Positive
• The program has been successful in terms of garnering interest and participation from low-income households and individuals in the Region • Take-up has doubled since the program began

5. CITY OF HAMILTON

5.1 Establishment

Community and Councillor concern and advocacy over the impact transit fare increases would have on those with low incomes (2006)

Report prepared by city staff from Community Services Department, connecting the idea of an Affordable Transit Pass (ATP) program to current city poverty issues and strategies (2007)

Presented to city Council - approved pilot

Communications strategy developed in partnership with other municipal departments

ATP made permanent, after evaluation and various extensions (2015)

5.2 Funding

The report first recommending an ATP in Hamilton suggested that $500,000 be taken from the Social Services Initiative Reserve to fund a one-year pilot project. That initial budget included monies for administration and staffing, assistance with communication, and program evaluation. Additionally, inclusion of OW/ODSP recipients laid the groundwork for a cost sharing agreement with the province subsidizing OW/ODSP patrons on an 80%-20% ratio (province-municipality). A proposal to make the ATP program more permanent was tabled in the 2011 budget negotiation. The proposal was successful.

For 2012, the ATP budget was approximately $403,000, including administrative costs. Most of the budget is allocated to the Community Services Department for passes: $261,000 (500 passes). The total amount includes a provincial contribution of $102,900. That amount breaks down into $64,800 for passes and covers half of the administrative costs in the Community Services Department ($36,300 for staff and $1,800 for other administration costs). The program budget also includes about $65,000 allocated to Public Works – Hamilton Street Railway for a ticket agent and other administrative expenses. The total annual cost more recently went down to $271,000 in 2015.

5.3 Operation

The ATP covers 50% of a regular monthly pass. To be eligible for the program one must be a working full-time, part-time, or casual (but not self-employed) with a family income that falls below after-tax LICO, or one must be a working recipient of OW/ODSP not receiving other transportation subsidies. An Income Tax NOA and four weeks' pay stubs are required with applications. Applications can be made through the Community Services Department and letters of approval are valid for six months. Patrons can purchase passes at the Hamilton Street Railway main ticket office by showing their letter of approval. Letters are signed each time that a pass is

purchased to prevent anyone from purchasing additional passes. The City of Hamilton approves an average of around 600 applicants and the program has capacity for 500 monthly passes. When it does reach full capacity, the ATP program operates on a first-come, first-served basis.

5.4 Challenges Encountered
- Single downtown point of sale
- Slow uptake of program in the first few months

5.5 Successful Strategies
- Connecting the idea of an Affordable Transit Pass Program to municipal poverty issues and strategies
- Development of a communication strategy to increase program uptake
- Community-based poverty group provides periodic feedback and suggestions on the program, and members of the Public Works department are consulted occasionally with respect to program operation

5.6 Impact
Six months into the program there was a telephone survey to evaluate the program.

Positive	Negative
•ATP used most often to get to and from work (22%), grocery shopping/running errands etc. (20%) and personal appointments (19%) •Helped patrons feel more independent (97%) •Easier for them to get to work (95%) •Made a difference in the family's budget (91%) •Helped maintain a connection to family and friends (87%) •Easier for them to run errands, schedule appointments, etc. (84%) •Helped them to keep their job (75%) •Many would not have been able to purchase a monthly transit pass without the ATP (73%)	•Only 5% increase in respondents who relied on public transit before versus after the registering in the program •When asked about administrative aspects of the program applicants said they would prefer something other than the single downtown point of sale

6. CITY OF WINDSOR

6.1 Establishment

Council concern over high unemployment rate

⬇

Launch of a poverty reduction strategy and corresponding CBO – Pathway to Potential

⬇

Fare structure review by Transit Windor

⬇

Community concern voiced over the cost of bus passes

⬇

Transit Windsor receives grant from Pathway to Potential for the Affordable Pass Program (APP)

⬇

Cross-sectorial collaboration in creation and implementation of program - Transit Windsor staff, Social Services staff, a city councillor, and two community groups: Pathway to Potential and Voices Against Poverty (2011)

6.2 Funding

Grant funding from Pathway to Potential covers the fare subsidy and administration costs. The funds are allocated to Transit Windsor. In 2011 program costs were approximately $125,000, and in 2014 the budget for the program was $200,000. The hope is that increased ridership through uptake of the APP will offset lost revenue as a result of the pass being discounted; however, this is not the expectation. Since City Council has promised limited tax increases, revenue generation to cover the subsidy and administration of the APP was noted as being critical to its continuation.

6.3 Operation

The initial uptake was slow, as with other similar programs, but the number of applicants increased as awareness of the program rose among eligible applicants interested in taking part in the program. There were 2500 patrons of the program in 2014. Applications are available online and at the Windsor transit terminal and centre. Free assistance completing the application is also

available. Eligibility is based on after-tax LICO and may last 6-12 months depending on the applicant's circumstances. Applicants must provide proof of their combined household income. The APP covers 50% of a regular monthly pass.

6.4 Challenges Encountered
- Slow uptake
- Revenue loss

6.5 Successful Strategies
- Non-confrontational communication between staff
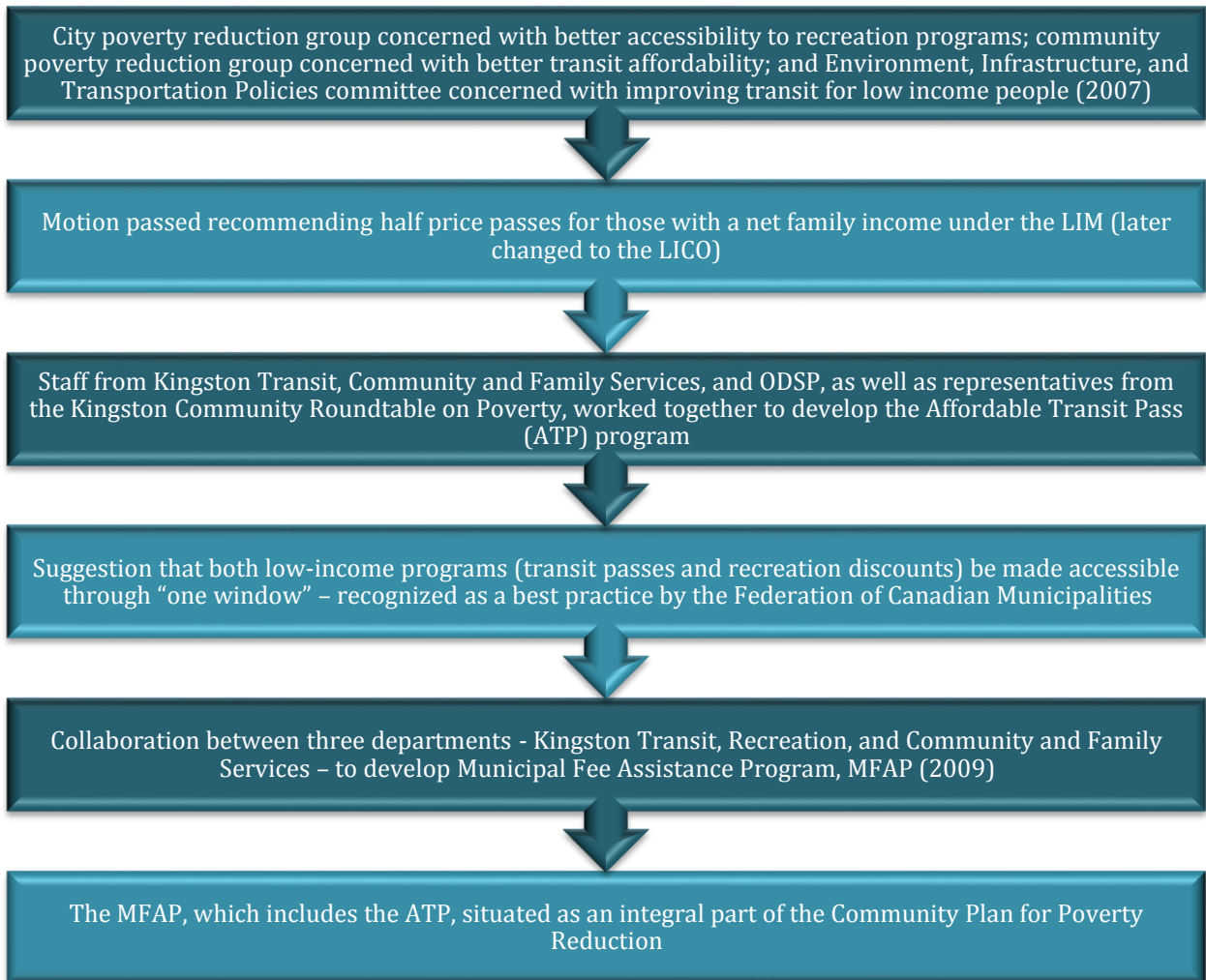- Exchange of information, knowledge, and experiences amongst stakeholders (inclusive of prospective pass users)

6.6 Impact
Pathway to Potential and Transit Windsor plan to continue to assess the impact of the APP. Anecdotally, impacts have been positive to date.

Positive	Negative	Recommendations
• New fare box and electronic bus passes, combined with information collected at the time of application, allow for data and information collection that can be used to determine needs, transit deficits, and benefits	• Transit Windsor is aware that fares have been and remain a barrier for some patrons	• Provide quality service and increase the accessibility, affordability, and availability of transit services

7. CITY OF KINGSTON

7.1 Establishment

City poverty reduction group concerned with better accessibility to recreation programs; community poverty reduction group concerned with better transit affordability; and Environment, Infrastructure, and Transportation Policies committee concerned with improving transit for low income people (2007)

⬇

Motion passed recommending half price passes for those with a net family income under the LIM (later changed to the LICO)

⬇

Staff from Kingston Transit, Community and Family Services, and ODSP, as well as representatives from the Kingston Community Roundtable on Poverty, worked together to develop the Affordable Transit Pass (ATP) program

⬇

Suggestion that both low-income programs (transit passes and recreation discounts) be made accessible through "one window" – recognized as a best practice by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities

⬇

Collaboration between three departments - Kingston Transit, Recreation, and Community and Family Services – to develop Municipal Fee Assistance Program, MFAP (2009)

⬇

The MFAP, which includes the ATP, situated as an integral part of the Community Plan for Poverty Reduction

7.2 Funding

The ATP program is funded through municipal taxation. Partners developing the program thought the loss in revenue resulting from the discounted fare might be recovered by increases in ridership. However, even though the program was more successful than anticipated, this cost recovery has still not occurred. The actual cost of the program in 2010 was $165,000 instead of the estimated $108,000. Kingston Transit absorbs the cost of the ATP program, other than costs related to administration. The Community and Family Services Department manages the administration costs.

7.3 Operation

The program provides a 35% discount off the price of a monthly transit pass for residents of Kingston, inclusive of adults, children, youth, and seniors in low income households, and OW/ODSP recipients, as measured by the after-tax LICO. The application process is friendly, quick, and simple. Application can be made on a drop-in basis at the Community and Family

Services Department or at a number of alternative locations. There is no cap in regard to the number of passes issued. Eligibility is determined on the spot and reviewed yearly. Once registrants have obtained a card indicating their eligibility they can then purchase a photo ID card and monthly transit pass at City Hall. Subsequent passes can be purchased online, providing a more accessible option for those who have access to technology. Those receiving social assistance may be able to cover all or part of the cost of the reduced transit passes through OW discretionary benefits, depending on their individual circumstances.

7.4 Challenges Encountered
- Administrative approach for the MFAP is unique and entailed considerable learning
- Need to ensure quick implementation of the program and reduce applicants' stress or anxiety
- Municipal departments involved did not commonly work together

7.5 Successful Strategies
- Poverty was one of Council's top concerns, and the province was also concerned with poverty in Ontario
- Good communication across municipal departments – community services staff as bridge
- Access to quality research on best practices, and useful data on potential applicants
- Adapting processes, procedures, and tools developed by others
- Administrative process that is simple and unobtrusive
- Application procedures that can be easily implemented at any service/intake location
- Clear information sharing protocols
- Training for front line staff
- Invaluable input from the Kingston Community Roundtable on Poverty
- The one-window approach reduces the need for multiple applications, and the sharing of income information across several municipal departments.

7.6 Impact
Approximately 2400 households completed MFAP applications during the first two years of operation.

Positive	Negative	Recommendations
•80% of households accessing the program were on social assistance while the remaining 20% would be classified as "working poor" •Between Nov 2011 and the launch of the ATP program, 657 individuals purchased at least one monthly discounted transit pass •ATP riders average about 38 trips per month, which is consistent with the regular adult monthly pass riders	•The point was raised that public transit does not always meet the need of city dwellers, inclusive of those who live in low-income households	•People with low incomes may require something in addition to public transit (ex. a car or taxi) given challenges surrounding the accessibility and availability of public transit that may limit the utility of a discount bus pass

8. CITY OF GUELPH

8.1 Establishment

A CBO, Guelph and Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination (GWTFPE), established

⬇

GWTFPE voices concern over the effect of fare increases on low-income people to Council - agreed (2011)

⬇

GWTFPE, Community and Social Services, and Guelph Transit develop recommendations

⬇

Affordable Bus Pass Program pilot approved (2012)

⬇

Community Voices, a group of people facing economic hardship, consulted on program features

⬇

Made permanent after successful pilot (2014)

8.2 Funding

The Affordable Bus Pass Program (ABPP) is covered through municipal taxes. In December 2011 City Council passed the next year's operating and capital budgets, also approving a 3.52% tax hike, the ABPP pilot, and reinstatement of bus service on some statutory holidays. The ABPP alone required a tax increase of over 3%, for implementation of the program mid-year. The cost of the program in 2012 was $135,000.

8.3 Operation

Passes are priced at 50% of the regular bus pass for youth, adults and seniors, respectively. Residents of Guelph are eligible for the program if they are low income, based on the LICO, and experiencing barriers to accessing public transit. Patrons must reapply annually. To avoid a complicated and stressful application process, program designers first committed to developing a person-centred, transparent and reasonable application process. Applications are available at the various locations throughout the city: City Hall, Guelph Transit, Evergreen Seniors Community Centre, and West End Community Centre. Passes can be purchased at the same locations once an approval letter has been received. The program has no cap and had 1800 patrons in 2012.

8.4 Challenges Encountered

- Financial: difficulty estimating cost recovery/loss of revenue, increase in ridership, and change in service requirements
- Workload: no dedicated ABPP staff, more staff time required than was expected, program uptake exceeded forecasts
- Data collection: data collected by three very different means (application forms, sales data from all locations that sell affordable passes, and pass swipes on the buses used by transit to track ridership). Each of these databases is managed by a different team and organized in a different way.

8.5 Successful Strategies

- According to those involved, the ABPP's establishment was without incident, in large part because of the commitment to poverty reduction amongcouncil, community organizations, and the public
- Public transit is seen as contributing to Guelph's sustainability
- Examining similar ATP programs in other municipalities
- Proactive marketing of the program to counteract the lag that has been noted in many ATP's between the launch of the program and the widespread use of the pass

8.6 Impact

In 2013 an evaluation study was performed, indicating many positive results and recommending some areas for further improvements.

Positive	Negative	Recommendations
•An estimated 27% of people living below the Low Income Cut-off in Guelph have become users of the ABPP •It has built financial assets by reducing the cost of transit •It has built physical assets by enabling users to get to work, apply for jobs, and access the services they need more consistently •It has built social assets by enabling users to make more trips for a greater variety of reasons and in a more flexible way •Four primary program goals were met: •Enabling more residents living with a low income to purchase monthly transit passes •Making a positive impact on the budget of low-income residents •Improving perceptions of overall wellbeing •Improving sense of contribution to community	•The total number of applications has exceeded the original estimate (of 1,800 applications) by 50% •Almost all affordable bus pass users (96%) had used Guelph Transit before entering the program: of the 910 re-applicants who stated that they were transit users prior to the ABPP, 47% were previous subsidized pass holders, 35% used cash and/or tickets, and 19% used a regular bus pass	•Explore extending turn-around times for applications, while maintaining customer focus •Consolidate and rationalize the application and sales databases •Review and streamline the process for analyzing and reporting program data •Create a dedicated program manager position and simplify the program structure •Assign additional staff time to the Service Guelph desk on "Bus Pass Days" •Explore the possibility of having key partners play a larger role in selling passes •Consider an alternate approach to income verification for users who are on ODSP/OW or users whose income is in transition due to recent unemployment, immigration or transition from school to work •Provide a plain language summary of the eligibility criteria and the application process •Create a formalized, transparent appeals process

9. CITY OF SASKATOON

9.1 Program Establishment

Provincially funded Discounted Bus Pass Program (DBPP) for social service recipients begins being utilized in neighboring cities Regina, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert (2003)

↓

Following precedent, Saskatoon joins with its own one-year pilot program (2006)

↓

Like the other Saskatchewan cities' programs, Saskatoon's is aimed at helping those with low-incomes in the city and increasing bus ridership

↓

Program becomes permanent (2007)

↓

Program later expands to include LICO-BT as eligibility rather than just receipt of social assistance, and combines DBPP and discount Leisure Access Program into one application process

9.2 Program Funding

The DBPP is partially funded through the provincial government's Ministry of Social Services, with the remainder from municipal taxes. The province contributed a total of $1.6 million to programs in the seven largest Saskatchewan cities in 2014: Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Swift Current, and Yorkton.

9.3 Program Operation

The DBPP allows low-income Saskatoon residents the opportunity to purchase a monthly bus pass at a reduced rate. It is part of the Low Income Pass, which combines the DBPP with the subsidized Leisure Access Program into one application process. Eligibility is based on falling below the before-tax LICO or receiving social assistance. If eligible, patrons receive a 22% discount on their monthly bus pass. For low-income residents, application forms are available at all City of Saskatoon leisure centres and at the Customer Service Centre. Applicants must include their NOA and mail the completed application to the Community Development Branch. For social assistance recipients, application forms are available at the Social Services office. The completed forms can be dropped off at Saskatoon Transit to purchase the reduced pass. Patrons are accepted to the program for one year at a time, after which they must be reassessed. The DBPP does not have any cap set on the number of patrons.

9.4 Challenges Encountered

[Not available]

9.5 Successful Strategies

- Similar programs had already been running in neighbouring cities for three years
- Combined low-income subsidies for transport and recreation into one application

9.6 Impact

Since its inception the Saskatoon program has continued to expand.

Positive
•Now includes both receipt of social assistance and LICO-BT as eligibility, to include the "working poor"

SUMMARY & COMPARISON

Program Establishment

The key factors that played a role in establishing the ATP programs profiled are: advocacy on the part of community groups and champions within government; awareness of the importance of transportation for those living on low incomes; and impending change that would make transit less affordable (Dempster & Tucs, 2012). Other important factors include an in-depth study of transportation options, development of committees to assist in operationalizing programs, inter-sectorial collaboration, and justifying the programs through existing municipal and provincial poverty reduction strategies. When analyzing the establishment process of the various programs profiled in this report there seems to be a typical linear trend that they followed. It may be summarized into four phases:

- Phase 1 Impetus & Advocacy – includes public concern and community involvement
- Phase 2 Research & Proposal – includes public consultations and review of similar initiatives
- Phase 3 Development & Implementation – includes multi-sectorial collaboration and a communications strategy
- Phase 4 Evaluation & Expansion – includes the switch from pilot to permanent programs as well as reducing rates/increasing caps/expanding eligibility

Program Funding

Many aspects of funding for affordable transit passes have been explored, such as how programs are funded, fund allocation, administrative costs, and revenue generation or loss. Primary funding for most programs comes from the municipal tax base. With just under half (*n*=8) of the 19 Canadian programs profiled receiving any form of provincial support, funding is an ongoing concern. In some jurisdictions the programs are operated by social service departments, while in others they are run directly by transit authorities. On the one hand, allocating funds to social services may be advantageous in that it allows for an appeal to the province for ongoing support; on the other hand, allocating funds to transit budgets may be advantageous due to reduced potential for caps and cuts (Dempster & Tucs, 2012). The administrative costs for the different programs profiled are variably carried by social services, transit authorities, community agencies, or some combination. Revenue generation or loss is the most difficult aspect to estimate with some communities reporting large increases in ridership (Kalinowski, 2014), and other communities reporting overall revenue loss (Tanasescu, 2007). The key question one must consider: is most of the target group already purchasing transit passes, or will providing the discount lead to increased sales that will offset the cost?

Program Operation

The most salient elements of program operation are the eligibility criteria, the application process, the sale of passes, and the partnerships involved. The most common ATP program eligibility is based on receipt of social assistance and/or falling below the LICO (either before- or after-tax). However, it is important to note that the former may exclude the "working poor" and the latter may be considered inadequate because it is too low and not based on the cost of living (Citizens for Public Justice, 2013). Pilot programs in three municipalities—Mississauga, Guelph, and Kingston—have suggested using the Low Income Measure (LIM) instead. An NOA is the

most common way to assess eligibility, but this may be problematic for those who do not file income tax returns (eg. homeless individuals) and it does not necessarily reflect an individual's current circumstances. The Region of Waterloo has circumnavigated this issue by having community agencies already familiar with the clientele dole out passes through an honour-based system (Dempster, 2009). "One window" eligibility for recreation subsidies and discounted monthly transit passes has been recognized as a best practice as well (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2010), and is currently being used by Calgary's Fair Entry program, Kingston's Municipal Fee Assistance program, and Saskatoon's Low Income Pass program. In regards to the sale of passes, processes that are non-stigmatizing are overwhelmingly favoured, with passes that look exactly the same as regular passes. Central sales locations have been found to create accessibility barriers for patrons, but are also beneficial due to having qualified staff and central database systems. Throughout the entirety of program operation, partnerships and collaboration are vital. Consensus and a readiness among leading partners like city councils, transit authorities, social services, and community groups to work together facilitated establishing and continuing the operation of programs.

Challenges Encountered

Challenges encountered by the various programs profiled were logistical, administrative, or financial in nature. Logistical challenges were the most common, for instance establishing a benchmark for eligibility, finding way to mitigate potential for fraud while still remaining non-stigmatizing, and dealing with the complexity of the application process. Administrative challenges were also common, for example training and learning involved with the new program, no dedicated staff for the program, and dealing with long waitlists due to higher uptake than anticipated. Lastly, financial challenges were encountered, such as loss of revenue, inconsistent funding, and finding the right formula for price versus number of passes.

Successful Strategies

Many of the municipalities found creative ways to mitigate the challenges. Analysis reveals that in their establishment ATP programs are most likely to succeed with the support of long-term community advocacy and cross-sectorial partnerships. They were also aided by rigorous research and relevance to current poverty reduction strategies. Accessibility was improved through clear information sharing protocols and using a single, simple and unobtrusive application process. Quick program uptake was ensured through wide communication strategies, and exchange of information amongst stakeholders similarly improved results. Finally, many of the programs strove to be as inclusive as possible, extending eligibility to both those receiving social assistance and those who are not.

Program Impacts: Benefits and Weaknesses

Many pilot programs have developed into permanent programs due to their success. Four of the longer-term programs have undergone formal evaluation (Region of Waterloo, 2013; Taylor Newberry Consulting [Guelph], 2013; City of Hamilton, 2008; HarGroup Management Consultants [Calgary], 2007). In each case, results have been used to support program continuation and/or expansion. The clearest indicator of success is the rise in consistent use of public transit within the low-income population. This trend was seen throughout all jurisdictions profiled, and take-up has even doubled in some of them. Benefits can also be viewed from the perspective of patrons, who considered the programs vital and effective in creating a positive difference in their lives. With the passes, patrons had more money to buy other things, visited

family and friends more often, went to medical appointments more often, took more training/education classes, found employment/better employment, and volunteered more often. Various low-income residents across Canada have had the opportunity to participate in ATP programs, including people on social assistance, people living with disabilities, youth, seniors, and the working poor. Each of these populations has gained valuable financial, physical, social, and quality of life assets as a result:

- Financial assets – reduced cost of transit resulted in more money to provide for other basic needs (eg. food and rent)
- Physical assets – increased mobility enabled users to get to work, apply for jobs, and access the services they need more consistently (eg. training/education and medical appointments)
- Social assets – users were able to make more trips for a greater variety of reasons and in a more flexible way; passes were used most often for getting to and from work, grocery shopping/running errands, and personal appointments, but could also be used to go out to events and community meetings more often
- Quality of Life assets – feeling more independent, improvements in family budget, maintaining connection to family and friends, greater sense of contribution to community, increased social inclusion, and reduced stress

While patrons and others celebrated the numerous benefits of the programs, they made several qualifications, too. Passes are still considered unaffordable for many, even at the reduced rates. Not enough passes are available in jurisdictions with caps, and restrictive eligibility criteria exclude many that require assistance. Furthermore, a greater diversity in types and points of sale is needed, rather than just one or a limited number. These barriers overlap with other limitations surrounding accessibility and availability of public transit. That is to say that the timing of buses and inconvenient schedules/routes can restrict the overall utility of an ATP program, regardless of the rate of discount.

It is important to try to broadly consider the full benefits of such discount transit programs. Most evaluations view the impact in narrow terms of direct benefits reaching only those involved in the programs. However, researchers suggest that a complete and comprehensive cost-benefit analysis considering the wider health, educational, economic, and social impacts of these programs would likely illustrate even greater value than they are currently credited with (Dempster & Tucs, 2012). Consider, for example, instances where vast amounts of money are being spent on social service programs, but the target population remains unable to access them because they lack the money required to take the bus. Such factors must also be addressed in evaluations going forward.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Research has identified access to affordable transportation as a significant feature in reducing income inequalities and improving quality of life (Muntaner et al., 2012; Litman, 2012). The growing number of income-based Affordable Transit Pass programs across Canada in recent years attests to the veritable possibility of implementing, continuing, and expanding such programs. This brief review found that nineteen municipalities across Canada have ATP programs in place, and two more are seriously considering implementing soon (Peterborough and Halifax). With this number steadily increasing, clearly it is time for the City of Winnipeg to step up as well. Winnipeg is one of the only major cities in Western Canada that is not currently running a pilot or permanent ATP program. Additionally, all provinces west of Manitoba have some form of provincially subsidized ATP programs. The main recommendation of this report is for the City of Winnipeg to implement its own ATP program, ideally with provincial support and funding. Other key learning and unique recommendations for the development of this ATP are as follows:

- Although the LICO is most common in other jurisdictions, the LIM may be a more appropriate benchmark measure for the target population
- The NOA may not adequately reflect an individual's current circumstances and therefore may not be ideal as the standalone method for assessing eligibility; community agencies familiar with the target population could be given the flexibility to manually override
- All of these "affordable" subsidized programs (usually ~50% discount) still found in their evaluations that the cost is too high for many, so a sliding scale may be a useful addition; this was recently approved and will soon be implemented in the City of Calgary, with the proposed discount ranging from 50-95% off the cost of an adult monthly pass
- Combine the ATP application process with the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program that is already being offered in Winnipeg, as this has been identified as a national best practice
- All possible perspectives and partners (especially relevant community groups and individuals experiencing poverty) should be considered and involved when working out details of program design, planning, implementation, and evaluation
- Ensure that an evaluation plan is developed into the program design, gathering both quantitative and qualitative data from patrons; this has been integral in many of the programs profiled to show areas of success and drive continued improvements

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APPENDIX A: Brief Profile of All Canadian Affordable Transit Pass Programs

Location	Program Name	Discount	Eligibility	Funding	Started	Cost (year)	Cap (n=?)	Users (year)
Calgary	Low Income Monthly Pass	56%	LICO-BT	City & Province	2005	$20,000,000 (2016)	No	25000 (2016)
Waterloo Region	Transit for Reduced Income Program	44%	LICO-BT, honour-based	City	2002	$407,000 (2015)	Yes (n=2300)	2300 (2013)
York Region	Transit Fare Subsidies Program	75%	OW/ODSP and working	City	2012	$886,000 (budget 2014)	Yes (n=1400)	623 (2014)
Halton Region	Subsidized Passes for Low Income Transit	50%	LICO-BT	City	2011	$630,000 (budget 2014)	No	550 (2016)
Hamilton	Affordable Transit Pass Program	50%	LICO-AT, OW/ODSP, and working	City & Province	2008	$271,000 (2015)	Yes (n=500)	500 (2012)
Kingston	Affordable Transit Pass	35%	LICO-AT	City	2009	$165,000 (2010)	No	not found
Guelph	Affordable Bus Pass	50%	LICO	City	2012	$135,000 (2012)	No	1800 (2012)
Saskatoon	Discounted Bus Pass Program	22%	LICO-BT or social assistance	City & Province	2006	not found	No	not found
Regina	Discounted Monthly Pass	70%	Social assistance	City & Province	2003	not found	No	2250 (2014)
Moose Jaw	Discounted Bus Pass	70%	Social assistance	City & Province	2006	$54,000 (2014)	No	2400 (2014)
Prince Albert	Reduced Bus Pass	75%	Social assistance	City & Province	2006	$190,000 (2014)	No	not found
Cornwall	Community Bus Pass	35%	OW/ODSP - first come, first served	City	2009	not found	Yes (n=150)	150 (2012)
Banff	ROAM Low Income Transit Pass	100%	LICO, AISH, or Alberta Seniors benefit	City	2007	not found	No	not found
British Columbia	BC Bus Pass Program	$45/yr	Low-income seniors and persons with disabilities	Province	1967	not found	No	1200 (2012)
Windsor - Pilot	Affordable Pass Program	50%	LICO-BT, OW/ODSP	City	2011	$200,000 (budget 2014)	No	2500 (2014)
Moncton - Pilot	Affordable Transit Program	50%	Subsidized tickets provided to community agencies	City	2016	$22,000 (2016)	not found	not found
Sudbury - Pilot	Affordable Transit Pass Program	50%	LICO-BT, OW/ODSP, and working	City	2016	not found	not found	not found
Mississauga - Pilot	MiWay Affordable Transportation	50%	LIM-AT - first come, first served	City	2016	$1,300,000 (budget 2016)	Yes (n=2500)	not found
Edmonton - Pilot	Low Income Transit Pass	60%	LICO	City & Province	2017	not found	not found	not found

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Entitlement to concessionary public transport and wellbeing: a qualitative study of young people and older citizens in London, UK

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Abstract

Access to transport is an important determinant of health, and concessionary fares for public transport are one way to reduce the 'transport exclusion' that can limit access. This paper draws on qualitative data from two groups typically at risk of transport exclusion: young people (12-18 years of age, n=118) and older citizens (60+ years of age, n=46). The data were collected in London, UK, where young people and older citizens are currently entitled to concessionary bus travel. We focus on how this entitlement is understood and enacted, and how different sources of entitlement mediate the relationship between transport and wellbeing. Both groups felt that their formal entitlement to travel for free reflected their social worth and was, particularly for older citizens, relatively unproblematic. The provision of a concessionary transport entitlement also helped to combat feelings of social exclusion by enhancing recipients' sense of belonging to the city and to a 'community'. However, informal entitlements to particular spaces on the bus reflected less valued social attributes such as need or frailty. Thus in the course of travelling by bus the enactment of entitlements to space and seats entailed the negotiation of social differences and personal vulnerabilities, and this carried with it potential threats to wellbeing. We conclude that the process, as well as the substance, of entitlement can mediate wellbeing; and that where the basis for providing a given entitlement is widely understood and accepted, the risks to wellbeing associated with enacting that entitlement will be reduced.

Key words
UK; Entitlement; Public transport; Young people; Older citizens; Belonging; Social exclusion; Wellbeing

Research Highlights

- Young people (12-18 year-olds) and older people (over-60s) receive free bus travel in London, UK.

- The receipt and enactment of entitlement can contribute to wellbeing by fostering a sense of community belonging.

- Where an entitlement is perceived to be 'earned,' participants also reported that it improved their sense of self-worth.

Introduction

Recent years have seen growing recognition that access to transport is an important determinant of health, including in the UK NICE guidance (NICE, 2008), The Marmot Review (Marmot et al., 2010, pp. 134-136), and transport policy approaches in cities such as London (GLA, 2011, pp. 196-197). In general, however, the multiple connections between transport and health are still far from receiving the policy attention they merit. Transport is normally needed in order to access health services; the goods necessary for health; the work and education that are determinants of health and the social networks that foster a healthy life. Differential access to transport is one of the ways in which health inequalities between people and places are generated (Macintyre et al., 2008), and age is one social factor that influences the risk of 'transport exclusion'. In the UK, for instance, the Social Exclusion Unit (2003, p. 2) cited transport-related problems as restricting young people's capacity to take up education or training opportunities. Young people's exclusion from participation has been variously conceptualised as arising from immobility (Barker et al., 2009; Thomsen, 2004), disempowerment (L. Jones et al., 2000; Kearns & Collins, 2003) or dependency on adults for transport (Barker, 2009; Fotel & Thomsen, 2004; Kullman, 2010). Older people have also been described as particularly at risk of transport-based social exclusion (King & Grayling, 2001, p. 166) or 'transport disadvantage' (Hine & Mitchell, 2001) and consequently of becoming isolated (Titheridge et al., 2009; Wretstrand et al., 2009), with significant numbers of older people reported to face difficulties in getting to health centres, dentists and hospitals (Audit Commission, 2001, p. 30).

Within the London region, a number of policy initiatives have formed part of a broader transport agenda that has, at various points, been more or less explicitly oriented to public health as well as other social goals including reducing dependence on car travel and mitigating the health effects of transport exclusion (Mindell et al., 2004). Concessionary fares for public transport are one approach to addressing transport exclusion, and in London two specific policies relate directly to age-related transport exclusion through the provision of fare exemptions. First, free bus travel for 12-16 year-olds was introduced by the Greater London Authority in September 2005 (TfL, 2007). This concession was subsequently extended in 2006 to include 17 year-olds in full-time education (TfL, 2006, p. 7) and subsequently all 18 (and some 19) year-olds in full-time education or on a work-based learning scheme (TfL, 2010a, pp. 8-9). On its introduction the scheme was explicitly positioned as a way of addressing transport exclusion with a particular emphasis on improving access to education and jobs: as a means "to help young people to continue studying, improve employment prospects and promote the use of public transport" (TfL, 2006, p. 7). Second, the 'Freedom Pass', funded by the 33 local authorities that make up London, is provided to all of those over 65 (or over 60 if born before 1950), entitling them to free transport at any time of day on all bus, underground and tram services and to off-peak travel on many rail services in the Greater London area (London Councils, 2011).

There is a small but growing body of evidence on the positive impact of such concessions on health generally. For older residents, the Freedom Pass was reported to reduce transport exclusion and enhance mental health (Whitley & Prince, 2005), and concessionary bus travel for older people is associated with a reduced risk of obesity (Webb et al., 2011) and with increased likelihood of walking more frequently (Coronini-Cronberg et al., 2012). For young people, concessionary bus travel in London has been reported to contribute to reductions in transport poverty, gains in independence and opportunities for enhancing wellbeing (A. Jones

et al., 2012). In Canada, significant association between transport mobility benefits and quality of life for older Canadians have been identified (Spinney et al., 2009).

However, the relationship between transport and health is not based solely on access to transport. Beyond the instrumental functions of transport for accessing goods and services, which can be enhanced by offering concessionary fares, are the less tangible psycho-social impacts of access to, use of and entitlement to transport. These are mediated in part by the social meanings of particular modes. For instance, in the context of what has been called a 'regime of automobility', in which the private car dominates as the default mode of transport (Sheller & Urry, 2000), those without access to a car report adverse effects on wellbeing from using less-valued alternatives (Bostock, 2001). For older people, driving cessation or lack of access to a car has been widely reported as a threat to wellbeing (Adler & Rottunda, 2006; Davey, 2007). In the UK, as in many other high-income countries, private car use is reported to provide a number of benefits for users, including self-esteem and a sense of autonomy (Goodman et al., 2012; Hiscock et al., 2002). Currently, such benefits are not always provided by public transport access. Bus travel in particular is often positioned as a stigmatised   'other' mode (Ellaway et al., 2003), primarily for use by those with few other options (Root et al., 1996, p. 32).

In this paper, we discuss the relationship between entitlements to concessionary fares, mobility and wellbeing. We focus not on the direct effects of entitlement to concessionary public transport on 'objective' measures of health, illness and disease, but rather on the symbolic meanings of 'entitlement' to public transport, and the implications of this for people's subjective perceptions of their wellbeing in one particular locality (London). Acknowledging that it "may be a somewhat slippery concept" (Cattell et al., 2008, p. 546), we understand 'wellbeing' here as a concept that captures understandings of health "which extend beyond a narrow bio-medically oriented definition of health as 'the absence of disease'" (Airey, 2003, pp. 129-130). Importantly for the present analysis, it is a concept that emphasises the ways that people interpret their own circumstances or social contexts in ways that relate to health (Airey, 2003; Cattell et al., 2008).   As Hiscock, Ellaway and colleagues have argued (Ellaway et al., 2003; Hiscock et al., 2002), if policies to wean people off car use are to succeed, the social and cultural associations of public transport need to be addressed. Reducing transport exclusion, and its damaging health effects, entails more than just increasing the provision of or access to transport. In order to optimise use, the mode provided needs to be culturally valued, and capable of enhancing autonomy, self-esteem and social inclusion; providing, in short, the kinds of psychosocial benefits associated typically with private car use. In London, with a relatively good public transport infrastructure, and a policy context in which private car use is actively discouraged, the meanings of public transport, particularly for older people, may be less devalued than has been reported for other settings.

Theoretically, 'entitlement' to a benefit of this kind provided explicitly to address transport exclusion could further stigmatise the groups targeted (Sen, 1995), thus off-setting health gains from concessionary transport with losses from the effects of loss of self-esteem or autonomy. This is likely to be particularly true if the benefit provides access to a mode of transport that is of low relative value.   Alternatively, concessionary transport may be intrinsically good for 'wellbeing' simply because it enables participation: a theme echoed in social policy literature that has addressed participation (Jordan, 2012). As well as being a route to social participation, transport also provides a way of *enacting* participation – a theme taken up in recent literature on cycling in particular (Aldred, 2010; J. Green et al., 2012), but

less well addressed in relation to public transport. To explore the symbolic effects of transport entitlement on wellbeing in the context of public transport systems, we examine how two groups entitled to free bus transport in London – young people aged 12-18 and older citizens – understand and value their entitlements, and how this might mediate the relationships between mobility and wellbeing.

Methods

This paper draws on qualitative data collected as part of a larger study examining the public health implications of concessionary transport for young people. Older citizens were included in the study for two reasons. First, those aged 60+ are entitled to a public transport fares concession in London (as discussed above). Second, young people's entitlement to free bus use raised some concerns in the media about possible negative effects on older people's access to bus travel as a result of over-crowding or fear-based exclusion (TfL, 2008). Between February 2010 and April 2012 we spoke to 118 12-18 year-olds and 46 60+ year-olds living in London. Data were generated using a mix of individual, pair and group interviews in order both to access interactions about public transport and also to ensure more private settings. The latter was thought necessary in case participants found groups a difficult place to discuss more sensitive issues such as financial barriers to transport. In-depth interviews (individual, pair or triad interviews) were conducted with 62 young people and 28 older people. These interviews, and 13 focus groups (ten with younger people and three with older people), focussed on the everyday travel experiences of research participants, and their preferences for different modes of transport.

Both younger and older people were recruited primarily from four local areas across London, selected to include a range of public transport provision. Two were inner London areas ('Hammersmith & Fulham' and Islington), with typically denser housing and more abundant public transport options, and two outer London (Havering and Sutton), where public transport is both less abundant and less used (TfL, 2010b). Areas were sampled in this way in order to include accounts from a range of inner and outer London communities characterised by different levels of public transport provision. Within each area participants were recruited purposively to include a range of participants by age, gender, ethnicity, ability, socio-economic status and typical mode of transport, with recruitment continuing until saturation.

Younger participants were recruited primarily via education and activity-based settings (including schools, academies, youth clubs and a pupil referral unit) with 22 participants also recruited from among young Londoners engaged in the 'Young Scientists' programme at the institution leading the study.[i] Excerpts from these accounts are tagged with the identifier 'YS'. Older residents were recruited mainly via community groups, charitable organisations and a local authority event. Harder to reach individuals such as those with visual impairments or aged 90+ proved difficult to recruit, and in these cases (n=3) we used personal networks from within London but outside the local areas listed above. Excerpts from these accounts are tagged with the identifier 'Other'.

Analysis was largely inductive, drawing on principles of the constant comparative method (Strauss, 1987), but informed by concepts from theoretical literatures on entitlement and the determinants of wellbeing. The authors collectively developed coding frameworks and coded data for analysis. When quoting directly from the data we have anonymised all names and other potential identifiers and have tagged all extracts with an identifier for gender (M or F),

area (Inner London [I] or Outer London [O]) and age or age range. Where quotes from two or more participants in a given interview or focus group are given, numbered identifiers for gender (e.g. 'F1') are given before each quote to help the reader differentiate between the individual participants quoted. This study was approved by the LSHTM Ethics Committee.

Findings

Two sets of narratives around the theme of 'entitlement' were evident in the accounts that we generated. In the first set, which we term '*formal entitlements*', the narratives relate to the receipt of statutory "welfare benefit entitlements" (Moffatt & Higgs, 2007, p. 450) – in this instance the entitlement of young and older citizens in London to travel without charge on particular public transport modes. In relation to this theme, participants talked about how and why they considered themselves to be 'entitled' to concessionary use of public buses. In the other set of narratives, which we term '*informal or perceived entitlements*', respondents discussed an interrelated set of ideas relating to their own personal sense of entitlement. Entitlements of this kind have been conceptualised "as a stable and pervasive sense that one deserves more and is entitled to more than others" (Campbell et al., 2004, p. 31; see also Lessard et al., 2011, p. 521). In the present study participants described the ways they understood their and others' 'rights', for want of a better term, to occupy particular, contested spaces on the bus, such as the 'priority seating' areas or the space near the door. Accounts of informal or perceived entitlements were organised by participants primarily in a categorical way – in particular according to age, disability, pregnancy and being accompanied by young children.

The significance of concepts of entitlement to respondents, and the degree to which these were linked to facets of wellbeing, arose inductively from the analysis, rather than being anticipated as an effect of, or explanation for the effects of, free bus travel. The notion of formal entitlements emerged without prompting in interview and focus group discussions with older people as an *in vivo* code, whereas 'informal entitlements' was a useful analytical code to make sense of some otherwise contradictory accounts of the role of bus travel in wellbeing (such as experiencing a bus ride as socially inclusive, but also potentially generating conflict with other passengers). In this sense, 'entitlement' is an explanatory theme which helps make sense of some of the more direct effects of free bus travel reported by younger and older passengers, such as providing accessible transport, enhancing social participation and providing a space for social interaction (J Green et al., in press; A. Jones et al., 2012).

Formal entitlements earned: Older citizens' understandings of their right to free bus travel

Older study participants, discussing why they thought they received free bus travel via their 'Freedom Passes', gave clear and consistent explanations. These revolved around the 'dues' that older Londoners reasoned that they had paid over their lifetimes (cf. Moffatt & Higgs, 2007, p. 458), with free public transport in turn conceptualised as a 'repayment' of sorts. On occasion, this was explicitly framed as an entitlement. As one respondent put it succinctly:

[W]e're entitled to them. We've worked all our life. (F, I, 75-89)

Notably, the Freedom Pass was generally understood as something that older people rightfully 'deserved', even on the odd occasion where people reported feeling 'lucky' to have it:

I know we've paid…our taxes and our dues and all the rest of it, but I still think we're very lucky to have this pass. (F, I, 65-89)

The primary understanding that travel concessions were a return on previous societal contributions was evidenced in some participants' explanations of why others did not deserve the same entitlements. These explanations often mirrored those for why older people did get free travel, in that free bus travel was described as less justified when granted to those they felt had 'not paid their dues'. One group mentioned on occasion was recent immigrants to London (who are eligible for the scheme on the basis of their age):

F1:   What I can't understand is…the people who come in [migrate], and they've
       not   paid any of the taxes or insurances like we all have done during my
              years… And they get bus   passes.
F2: Yeah, well that's what I'm against. That's not fair. (I, 75-89)

Criticisms by older respondents of the entitlement of young people to free bus travel were more implicitly articulated in terms of a lack of contribution. Sentiments that young people's concession is undeserved were framed either in terms of a generational unfairness (for example, older participants did not benefit from this concession when they were children themselves or when they were parents of young children) or in terms of the ways in which young people choose to use concessionary travel:

[A]ll my children had to…walk to and from school… I could have killed Ken
[Livingstone, former Mayor of   London] for giving   kids the right to travel on
the buses, really and truly… They [young people] do abuse it [free bus travel] they
get on, they get off [the buses]. (F, I, 70-74)
Well I used to have to walk to school...now, they get on for two bus stops (F, I, 75-
89)

In summary, therefore, older citizens shared a strong and coherent sense of entitlement in relation to their own receipt of free public transport, which was evident in an unproblematic acceptance of their rightful entitlement, and a consequent questioning of that of others. It was understood as part-and-parcel of a wider set of benefits to which they are entitled on the basis of the taxes, insurances and 'dues' that they have paid over the course of their lives.

Formal entitlements as conditional: Young people's understandings of their right to free bus travel

Young people offered a more disparate, and in general more tentative, set of explanations for why they felt they had been granted their free bus travel. For some, and dovetailing with the official rationale for the scheme (TfL, 2006, p. 7), it was about increasing young people's capacity to "stay in education longer" (F, I, 16) and to pursue "extra-curricular activities" (M, O, 14-18). However, there was less consensus across young people's accounts than among the older respondents, and a range of other explanations were given by young people as to why they thought they were granted free bus travel, including the scheme being a means to cut transport-related pollution and it coming into force to help relieve financial pressure on working mothers. The lack of consensus was overtly played out in many of the group discussions, with some explicitly debating both the rationale and the likely effects of the scheme:

M1: I think it [the granting of free travel] could be because some people are lazy,
     tired, if they're tired they won't go to school. So then the government try and
     encourage them to go in, and they've got free travel…

> M2: But then wouldn't that…defeat the point of…the government fitness thing?
> Because if they're trying to encourage people to get fit,   why encourage them to
> take the bus then?
> M1: True. (I, 15)

Thus, unlike the explanations given by older people, those from young people as to why they are granted free travel were more varied and were offered with uncertainty, with young people challenging, debating and altering each others' assumptions about the rationale for the concessionary bus travel they received. In addition, nothing in the accounts of young people suggested that, like their older counterparts, they felt that they had *earned* the right to travel without charge. However, as a universal benefit (Goodman et al., in press), entitlement was still understood as *relatively* unproblematic, given it was legitimated largely through socially valued ends such as fostering access to education, rather than as a potentially stigmatised benefit for those in particular need. Young people thus displayed a weaker sense of being entitled to free travel – and did not once conceptualise it explicitly as an 'entitlement' in the way that older people did – but they valued it all the same, with accounts of its benefits universal across our data set.

The fragility of formal entitlements to travel

The weaker sense of entitlement articulated by young people is perhaps most evident in accounts of what happened when they did not have the pass with them because it had been stolen or confiscated (for breaches of the 'Behaviour Code' (TfL, 2010c) – a code of conduct linked to receipt of concessionary bus travel which applies to young people but not to older citizens). As this young man's account of a journey following the theft of his 'Oyster'[ii] travel pass implies, apart from the transport exclusion that results from a stolen card, there are social risks that can arise from negotiating their rather more fragile entitlement:

> [T]he day I was robbed I lost my Oyster. I had a missing [glasses] lens, ...buttons
> ripped off my shirt and a bruise on my face. And then I tell him [the bus driver] I
> don't have my Oyster, I got robbed, and he's like 'I've heard all these excuses…'
> and he was actually swearing at me…and then he kicked me off (M, I, 15-16)

Enacting entitlement, as Sen (1995) describes, can be difficult, and in situations where participants were without their pass, entitlement to use the bus could not be assumed as a 'right', but had to be negotiated. As one respondent put it, if you "just lost it [your pass] that same day you'd have to find a nice caring bus driver or they'll just be like, sorry mate I can't help you" (M, O, 15).

Young people conveyed the fragility of their entitlement in accounts, therefore, in a manner that corresponds both to the conditionality of their particular entitlement (on 'good behaviour') and to the lesser extent to which they felt they had actively earned their passes. While the substance of the entitlement conferred to young people and older citizens is comparable (bus and public transport fare exemptions respectively), it is clear that the conditions in which these entitlements are conferred mediate the status of the entitlement (and how this is in turn enacted) for each group.

Affective formal entitlements: riding the bus and belonging in London

When entitlement was unproblematic, and users had the capabilities to enact that entitlement, a salutogenic function was conferred not just by the receipt of that right, but also the enactment of those rights. Entitlement to free bus travel not only brought an

understanding of the operation of entitlements to the fore for young and old people but also, in turn, this understanding impinged on the sense of belonging (to London as a community or polity) experienced by our participants. The concessions informed the place-based identities (or sense of belonging) that our study participants construct for themselves. Specifically, the concessions engendered an enhanced and significant sense of 'being a Londoner'. As one older person put it:

> I guess some other thing that is quite good [about the travel concession], it makes you feel a Londoner. For what it's worth. (F, I, 70-74)

For younger users, often aware that their concession was unusual to their city, this sense of belonging to the city was often stronger, and more explicitly framed as having an effect on wellbeing through fostering pride:

> It [the Zip Card scheme]...makes you feel proud [to be a Londoner] because you're at the front of everyone, because you're the ones who have brought in these new schemes that are working and making your life easier... (M, O, 15)
> And also you have this mutual understanding of [being...] a Londoner, you're the same as me now. ...And there's…this sense of community in this huge, huge [city.] (F, O, 18)

In part, the enhanced sense of 'being a Londoner' that participants derived from concessionary access to public transport stemmed from the capacity these concessions afforded them to "get to know" (M, I, 12-13) or "learn about" (F, YS, 17) London by travelling widely in it. As one young person put it:

> I like it [having the Zip Card] because you feel kind of unique..., and it's only in London. [Y]ou can travel around London because you're a kind of a Londoner, but other people can't. (F, O, 17)

In this respect, many of the younger aged study participants, in particular from the outer London boroughs, recounted exploratory bus journeys they had conducted "up London" (M, O, 13-16) to "the West End" (F, O, 15-16) or even to destinations unknown on account of their being able to travel by bus without charge. Concessionary bus travel, therefore, affords young people a topographical engagement with their urban surroundings which enhances their familiarity with the city by rendering them "more aware of where you're going, how to get to places" (F, O, 14-15).

Beyond evoking a feeling of belonging or a sense of community, the receipt of a transport concession was important to recipients because it indicated to them that they resided in an innovative polity – in a city that is "at the front of everyone" as the young man quoted earlier puts it. Some recipients valued the concession, that is, not only for the belongingness that it implies, but also because it indicated to them that they live in a progressive society:

> I've just taken it [concessionary travel] for granted... That's what a civilised society would do (M, Other, 90+)

On occasion, this distinctiveness of London was described in comparison to other settings, in particular by young people. For instance, one focus group participant described how her "cousin [who] lives really far away...just wishes she could have more buses and the free travel...to get around more" (F, O, 14-15). By contrast, for older passengers who shared concessionary fares with other older people in England (Department for Transport, 2012), the referent for 'belonging' was typically more generic than just the city, and instead encompassed a broader sense of societal belonging. Specifically, this was articulated in terms of entitlement to a Freedom Pass being a sign of 'recognition' from the wider polity, and as therefore a positive affirmation of social worth:

> [I]t's like [being] an old army veteran or something, you sort of feel, oh, well, I've got a   free pass and I'm recognised. [P]eople say, that people who are, women who are older are invisible. And there's a sort of thing, well, I'm being recognised, acknowledged. I'm not being shunted, for once I'm not being shunted I'm being acknowledged. So I think in this way it's…quite important... The Freedom Pass isn't just, I've got a free pass. It does mean a lot of things. (F, I, 70-74)

Thus, entitlement to concessionary bus travel, if understood as resulting from valued, or at least unproblematic, social attributes or needs has potentially beneficial effects on wellbeing through the positive symbolic meanings that attach to that entitlement. Entitlement can, that is, contribute to a user's sense of belonging to a place or society.

However, when entitlement is understood as deriving from less valued social attributes, its enactment may have less positive implications for a sense of self worth. One rare example from accounts of formal entitlement to concessionary public transport suggests this, describing the discomfort felt at times by a Freedom Pass user in the course of using the bus:

> [Y]ou do get this impression, from people, that you haven't paid, so you don't deserve a space of your own, you know? I don't take it to heart, I really don't...I just pick that up as...you can see the look on their [other passengers'] faces (F, I, 70-74)

Although such accounts are rare, they do indicate that an understanding of how group-specific entitlements such as concessionary bus travel are perceived by others (and how in turn this shapes attitudes towards recipients) is crucial to the likely health promoting effects (or otherwise) of transport entitlements. Whether the entitlement is constructed as based on valued attributes (contribution to society, ability to take part in education) or on less valued attributes (such as not paying one's way) is likely to change the symbolic meaning of enacting that entitlement, and in turn the psycho-social implications of that enactment. To illustrate, we turn now to the category of less formal or perceived entitlements to particular spaces or seats on the buses discussed by the study participants, which were more likely than formal entitlements to be open to contested claims to legitimacy.

Informal entitlements: Contested claims to occupy space on the bus

Informal entitlements included those to sit at crowded times of day, or to sit in 'priority seats', or to board the bus ahead of others. For older participants, accounts often focussed on the normative expectations these participants hold about getting or being offered a seat on the bus, and on the Goffman-esque social interaction strategies (Goffman, 1966) they employed to signal that they were entitled to a seat:

> [T]he schoolchildren…. They're so noisy and well they do give you your seat now because the look we give them, they decide they'd better give you the seat. (F, O, 80-84)

There was no straightforward and mutually-recognised hierarchy of spatial rights on public buses. Rather, a cross cutting hierarchy based on the one hand on 'needs', and on the other 'rights', was articulated through stories of contested claims and difficulties in identifying whose access should be prioritised. A number of scenarios were brought to our attention in which rights to seating and to other passenger space on buses (and here the term 'rights' was often explicitly used) were disputed. These accounts often pertained to the section of the bus opposite the rear (exit) doors where seats are not provided. This is a clear space that is usually occupied by standing passengers during peak travel periods, and by infant buggies, passengers in wheelchairs, pieces of luggage or stowed shopping trolleys belonging to older/less mobile passengers at other times of the day. It is at these non-peak times that

reported problems in terms of a clash of perceived entitlements to space on the bus were
repeatedly reported to arise, as in the following example:

> Because… people are so unsociable on buses I tend not to get on with my trolley.
> ...Not because I'm shy, but you get these mums, with their great big four-by-four
> [wheels] prams and I have been told, "that [her trolley] needs to go!" I have got a
> letter…from [TfL – London's transport authority] to say that I have as much right as
> them to be on the bus. (F, I, 70-74)

Given the policy concern that offering concessionary bus travel to young people would
reduce older passengers' ability to use the bus, one somewhat surprising finding was that the
most frequently reported tension when it came to competing rights claims on the bus was
between mothers with buggies and others (including older people with shopping or mobility
trolleys and those using wheelchairs) in need of non-seating space. The recourse to external
legitimisation for a rights claim, as in the example above of the "letter from TfL", was rare,
but it does illustrate the potentially contestable nature of the entitlement to such space. More
typical as a way to negotiate disputed rights was a range of subtle gestures deployed by
fellow bus passengers to communicate their perceived superior entitlement to space on the
bus. While many young people talked about their willingness to offer their seats to
"whoever is deserving" (M, I, 15), their accounts on occasion highlighted how the occupation
of space on the bus could be a source of dispute. Thus, two young focus group participants
described their experience of such interactions between passengers as follows:

> F1:   [I]t's when you're on the bus and you're sitting down and the old person
> comes along and they look at you expecting you to stand up.
> F2:   Yeah, they give you that dirty look.
> F1:   They give you the look...as if you're supposed to stand up for them. But
> sometimes you're tired. ...And if that little area...chosen for them [the priority
> seating area] is full up [then] they come to the back and then start expecting other
> people to get up.
> F2:   ...I feel old people feel they have the right to the whole bus. (O, 15-16)

Here again the language of rights, and rights that are perceived as applying in an unequal
way, is used explicitly when disputes over space on the bus is discussed. In this instance it is
clear that these young people do not share the view that older people should be offered a seat
automatically if there is nowhere else to sit: the 'right' derived from a social attribute (age)
does not necessarily trump that derived from a 'need' (being tired).

In the abstract, users could construct a hierarchy of claims to space on the bus. Thus, in
one interview two of the interviewees articulated their understanding of the hierarchy of bus
users that they would give their seat up for – old people, disabled people and pregnant
women (M, I, 15) – and similar hierarchies were provided in other accounts. However, in
discussions, and in accounts of actual experiences of contested claims, what becomes clear is
that this hierarchy is mutable. For instance, in one discussion, some of the participants
argued that they "don't feel like [an overweight person] should have a seat as much as…an
elderly person or someone with a small child" (F, O, 14-18). At the same time, however,
some of the young people we spoke to expressed how they felt very much *subject to* these
entitlement claims, rather than in a position to assert their own claims.

The findings also suggested that where entitlement is based overtly on need (rather than
rights), enactment of the informal right is recognised as carrying a certain risk of disrespect
for either party involved in a given negotiation of space on the bus. For instance, as the
discussion above shows, both older and younger respondents referred to the "look" that older

bus users would have to give on occasion in order for a young person to give up their seat. This bore the risk for the older person of having to assert themselves in public, but also for the younger person of having to defer to another passenger in front of their peers, in particular if they were not thanked for their actions:

> F1:   The elderly people completely disrespect somebody just because they're young. … [A] lot of the time…there's no verbal abuse but you can just see them looking at people like, you're in my seat…
>
> M1:   And then what annoys me is you give up your seat and…they don't even say thank you… They believe they have the right to sit there, that you should just get off, in a sense. (O, 14-18)

Elsewhere, in a group interview conducted with young people, uncertainty around whether or not a fellow bus user was pregnant was described as a potential source of disrespect:

> M1:   When I do sit down I'll give it up for an old person, a... paralysed person, or disabled [person]
>
> M2:   And pregnant people … because that's the issue. ...If they ask for it [the seat] I'd jump up straightaway but...if I see someone I think is pregnant, I just try and figure it out. ...I just try and study [the person's figure], if you know what I mean, to make sure I don't end up insulting someone. (I, 15-16)

The ambiguity of entitlements based on need and vulnerability implied above meant that less mobile study participants on occasion indicated the important role of outward signifiers of entitlement to their everyday use of public transport. For instance, in an exchange between two older study participants, both over 90, one of them described how:

> [E]specially because I've got a walking stick, people are extremely kind, and the kids help you down if necessary, they certainly give way to you once you get on the bus. And … I don't even have to show my pass sometimes, [even though] I'm supposed to (M, Other, 90+)

Our findings also suggest that the potential for negotiations of space on the bus to generate disrespect and disharmony on occasion became visible when hierarchies of social difference intersected with those of vulnerability, as in this discussion between older bus users in outer London:

> F1:   They will not move, they will not move.... They don't move, schoolchildren do not *move...*
>
> F2:   I've always found they will move....
>
> F3:   *I'd have thought* that they would move but it's interesting, I wonder if they would give it to a white woman but not to [a non-white woman]
>
> F4:   Yes that's it, that's it. (O, 65-89 [emphasis in speech])

These accounts demonstrate that buses, as a constituent part of the urban public realm, constitute important 'sites' for the enactment of citizenship (see Isin, 2009, p. 370). Within this, they show that a complex set of norms and informal dicta are deployed in the course of everyday bus travel as a means to try to negotiate competing attitudes towards entitlement to sit, or occupy particular spaces, on buses. Importantly, these norms and dicta are mutable and so are contested, with the risks incumbent to this, in the course of bus travel.

Discussion

It is increasingly well established that access to transport is an important determinant of health, and emerging research findings suggest that concessionary fares have a role to play in fostering wellbeing. In this paper, we have explored an important mediator of the relationship between concessionary fares and wellbeing, namely how entitlement to that benefit is understood. We also discuss the conceptual significance of entitlements in relation to public bus travel by younger and older people. In doing so, we have shown how these understandings and deployments of formal and perceived entitlements can be 'affective', by which we mean that they can impinge on recipients' sense of wellbeing as broadly conceived.

Where entitlements are understood as arising from valued aspects of the self (such as contributions to society) they straightforwardly constitute a route to enacting 'belonging' and deriving a sense of self-worth. When the rationale for a given entitlement is less easily understood via recourse to societal contribution, and the enactment itself is more fragile (as with entitlements granted to young people), there are possibilities that enactment can be fraught with risks of 'disrespect'. The main implication of this study is that concessionary public transport has a set of effects on wellbeing that go beyond its effects on levels of physical activity through the elimination and generation of 'active travel' journeys (e.g. Besser & Dannenberg, 2005; Webb et al., 2011) and its capacity to mitigate the social isolation that may result from transport exclusion (e.g. King & Grayling, 2001; Spinney et al., 2009; Whitley & Prince, 2005). Though hard to measure, this set of potential health effects warrants attention as it relates to the degree to which often-marginalised groups (here, older citizens and young people) hold and report a sense of belonging (to a place or society) and perceive themselves to be recognised as valued and deserving citizens.

Study participants reported that the entitlement they received was important to them not only because it provided concessionary travel (and in turn facilitated participation in a range of social activities) *but also for symbolic reasons*. Our research suggests that for young people and older citizens alike, receipt of fare concessions on public buses and on the wider public transport network in London respectively signified a belonging to a conurbation (London in this case) and to the citizenry of that conurbation. The concessions were seen to bolster any 'sense of being a Londoner' that the recipient might construct for her- or himself, and to contribute "to the strengthening of people's belonging to and perception of place" (Kearns, 1991: 530).

At the same time, for older recipients, receipt of the concession also brought a valued sense of societal recognition. The concession was understood to be, and presented to us as, a reflection of the entitlement to which older London residents were due on the basis of the contribution that they had made to society over the course of their lives so far. Notably, this sense of earned entitlement was not shared by the younger cohort of study participants.

In terms of outcomes for wellbeing (and in turn health if we see these two concepts "as part of a continuum" (Cattell et al., 2008, p. 546), these two concepts, belonging (or 'solidarity') and recognition (or 'significance'), are component parts of the psychological sense of community construct outlined by Clarke (1973) and reframed in the context of 'wellbeing' by Young et al (2004). As Young et al (2004, p. 2629) put it "[s]ense of solidarity refers to sentiments such as feelings of belonging, togetherness, cohesion, and identification

[and...s]ense of significance entails members feeling that they are appreciated as important contributors to the group, thereby developing a sense of achievement, fulfilment and worth." More recently, both concepts have been identified as key indicators of wellbeing – for example in the New Economics Foundation's (2009) *National Accounts of Well-being*, 'trust and belonging' is included as an indicator of social wellbeing while 'self-esteem' is included as an indicator of personal wellbeing.

Critically, what this paper suggests is that it is not only the *substance* of entitlements that generate health outcomes, as has previously been demonstrated in relation to concessionary travel schemes (Coronini-Cronberg et al., 2012; A. Jones et al., 2012; Webb et al., 2011). In addition, the very act of entitling (or being entitled to) benefits can shape feelings of wellbeing (that can determine health) in and of itself. The very process of entitling individuals and groups impinges upon the wellbeing of entitlement recipients. In this instance, then, we argue that public transport concessions not only mitigate the particular transport-related barriers to social inclusion faced by young and older people discussed in the introduction to this paper, but more broadly that the act of entitlement can serve to mitigate wider forces of social exclusion faced by these groups. In this way, entitlements directed towards younger and older members of the population can act to reduce the feelings of exclusion, disenfranchisement and isolation felt by these groups, and might also act to improve their sense of self-worth.

Conclusion

The provision of concessionary transport is identified as a policy intervention that can support wider strategies to tackle social exclusion. In the UK context this is understood to be primarily by ensuring "that bus travel, in particular, remains within the means of those on limited incomes and those who have mobility difficulties" (Department for Transport, 2012). If the effectiveness of a free bus transport scheme resides in (say) its ability to promote access to goods and services or social inclusion, we suggest that its 'affectiveness' relies on how far it shapes the meaning of access and entitlement for its users. Here, where entitlement was understood as based on rights, it could enhance wellbeing. Where it was based on needs and vulnerability, it was more problematic, with social risks of underlining social marginalisation rather than fostering inclusion.

In this paper, we have sought to understand, through qualitative enquiry, the ways that recipients of such transport concessions understand and value the entitlements that they receive. This has suggested that beyond the substance of the entitlements themselves, the process and conditions of entitlement are also important when it comes to considering the effects of a given entitlement on recipients' wellbeing. In particular, we have found that the relationship between entitlements and wellbeing is mediated by the sense of belonging that receipt of an entitlement confers on the individual. This, in turn, is a function of the nature of a given entitlement: where the entitlement has an ontological fit with a sense of personal entitlement then wellbeing can be enhanced, but where the entitlement is conditional or based on needs, rather than rights, then the rationale behind it is negotiable, and a recipient's sense of wellbeing can be marginalised in the process of trying to enact that entitlement. This finding suggests that to reduce the risks to wellbeing that can come with enacting entitlements, policy-makers should pay attention to communicating a cogent rationale for a given entitlement so that the wider public better understand why that entitlement has been conferred.

Conflict of interest

None

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[i] The 'Young Scientists' programme offers work experience in an academic setting to young people aged 14-18 from schools in deprived parts of London. For further information see: http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/aboutus/introducing/volunteering/ysp/index.html.

[ii] 'Oyster' refers to the plastic card used to access London's transport system; as here, young people often used the term 'Oyster' to refer specifically to their free pass (the 'Zip Card').