

How Will We Pay For It?

Taxes already cover most of the cost.

An additional \$180 million in tax revenue [5% of Ottawa's annual total] could make the current system free - roughly \$200 per person per year.

This is not an insignificant amount, but not impossible either. It is a lot less than the annual cost of a bus pass [\$1400/year]. Even an Equipass costs more than \$700/year. Raising parking fees and development charges, and reallocating funds from road construction could lower the tax increase substantially. However, we would need additional federal and provincial funds to create the accessible system we need.

It's the Way of the Eco-Future

Free transit is trending. **100 cities offer free transit already.** Five major German cities have announced their intention to go free. In many cities transit is free for particular groups, as in Winnipeg and Calgary, or in designated areas.

Getting There

We need to build a movement strong enough to overcome the opposition. That movement will be centered on the users of public transit but will also include a wide range of working and professional people, including OC Transpo employees.

And we need to push for immediate reforms that lower costs and increase accessibility such as:

- Expanded service in outlying areas
- More frequent service for those who need to shop, get to appointments, to school or work at off-peak hours
- Safer, more comfortable service for people with disabilities and/or young children, and night time users
- The adoption of cleaner, more fuel-efficient vehicles

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freeaccessibletransit@gmail.com



freetransitottawa.ca



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Learn more about climate change at climateandcapitalism.com

Free Transit Ottawa is made up of environmental and social justice activists who share a common goal of a more equitable and sustainable future for all. We see public transit as having a crucial role in combatting climate change, and promoting social justice.

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Confronting Climate Change

Rising temperatures, wildfires, powerful hurricanes and floods demonstrate the reality of climate change. It affects all of us, but hurts ordinary workers and the poor most.

Almost all the people who died during the recent heat wave in Quebec were elderly and poor.

The devastation of Hurricane Katrina was felt almost entirely by the less well off.

Globally, emissions policies are weak and inadequate. According to the United Nations, current plans in the G20 countries will achieve only 1/3 of the reduction in greenhouse gases needed to keep temperature rises below 2°C.

Public Transit as a Climate Solution

Transportation is the leading cause of the greenhouse gases causing climate change. And increasing the use of public transit will make a big impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

Transportation accounts for **34%** of Ontario's carbon footprint.

Per trip, switching from car to bus reduces greenhouse gases by **2/3**.

Do We Really Mean Eliminating Fares?

Yes, we do! Free public services are not unprecedented. We don't pay for public schools, health care, fire services, or to walk on sidewalks. We don't even pay to ride in elevators.

And research shows that a big shift to public transit happens only when public transit is free at the point of use – when you can just hop on a bus without thinking about cash, transit card, or cost.

Free, accessible transit would provide particular benefits to low-income people who rely on public transit to get around – the same people who are most affected by climate change.

Ottawa's Backward Transit Policy

OC Transpo cash fares are the highest among major cities in Canada.

Transit fares increased by 21% from 2011-2017 – that's more than inflation.

Meanwhile, ridership fell in the same period ... despite a population increase.

Accessible Too!

We don't just need free, we need more and better services. More buses and trains to get us to work, appointments, shopping, entertainment and public events safely, comfortably and quickly.

Additional Benefits

A free, accessible system would be:



Cheaper

Car owners can save over \$5000 a year by switching to transit.



Safer

Switching to transit would almost eliminate traffic injuries and deaths.



Fairer

Expanding transit increases the ability of those on a low income, new immigrants and other marginalized groups to access employment, and participate in social, political and cultural activities.

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