



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: September 17, 2019

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Meeting Date: September 25, 2019

TO: Library Board

FROM: Kurt Heinrich, Chair, Community Relations, Planning and Development Committee

SUBJECT: #AllOnBoard Campaign Request

SUMMARY

This report provides a recommendation from the Committee to endorse the #AllOnBoard Campaign, and correspondence received by the VPL Board requesting this endorsement.

PURPOSE

This report is for decision.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board endorse the #AllonBoard campaign and direct staff to send a letter of support on behalf of the Vancouver Public Library Board.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Community Relations, Planning and Development Committee discussed the relationship of transit to use of the Library, identifying that for people with lower income, teens and others who depend on our services and spaces, transit is critical to their ability to use services and their safety, and that providing accessible service is a fundamental VPL value and part of the strategic plan. Trustees noted that the information provided by the campaign is limited and may not be adequate to understand the implications. Trustees also observed that the Library Board rarely endorses campaigns that are not directly linked to library service, and that participation should be limited to sending a letter of support to have minimal impact on operations.

BOARD POLICY

The terms of reference for the Community Relations, Planning and Development Committee include responsibility to “develop the Library’s response or suggest initiatives to other levels of government” and overseeing communications strategies and initiatives. The Library’s [Endorsement Policy](#) applies to this decision.

BACKGROUND

The Board received the attached information via email from a community member with a request for a motion. The email noted that the campaign was urged by one of their volunteers to contact the VPL Board to seek support, and that they had received advice of the Chief Librarian and other community services staff. The Chief Librarian notes that this advice was to provide the process for contacting the Board with a motion.

DISCUSSION

The letter and proposed motion are attached. The VPL Board has rarely endorsed campaigns that are not directly related to libraries. In the past ten years, beyond library issues, the VPL Board endorsed the \$10 a day childcare campaign: <https://www.10aday.ca> in 2012.

The VPL Endorsement Policy notes that the following factors should be considered in decisions:

1. Engagement of VPL financial and personnel resources
2. Potential risks to or enhancement of VPL’s reputation
3. Furtherance of VPL’s priorities and goals

The discussion of requests that are in furtherance of VPL’s priorities and goals includes:

“As examples, the following endorsement requests are amongst those that may be considered to be in furtherance of VPL’s priorities and goals:

- Endorsement of initiatives that protect or advance information rights;
- Endorsement of a policy or submission statement issued by a library organization; or
- Endorsement of activities that seek to enhance access or engagement with library services or information.

In contrast, endorsement requests concerning activities that are unrelated or contrary to VPL’s priorities and goals are generally not encouraged, except where such requests are allied with VPL’s services and will not burden VPL resources, pose no risks to VPL’s reputation, and associated activities will not disturb patrons. As examples, campaigns that seek support for affordable childcare or advancement of social inclusion initiatives may be allied causes the library may wish to endorse.”

The Board Chair notes that this issue is not within VPL's jurisdiction, and that it is a comment on another organization's responsibilities so may not be appropriate for VPL, whereas Vancouver City Council and to a lesser extent the Parks Board have more relationship to the issue. He also notes that there is limited discussion of funding in the materials and that the VPL Board is not well informed on the complexity of the issues, which could require service reductions or tax increases.

City Council [approved a motion related to this campaign on January 16, 2019.](#)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Response to this campaign would require staff time, which will vary depending on the response the Committee recommends.

FINAL REMARKS

Communications of this nature are handled at the discretion of the VPL Board.

September 3, 2019

Dear Vancouver Public Library Board of Directors,

Thank you for the opportunity to bring to your attention the crucial issue of lack of affordable transit in Metro Vancouver, and its impact on low income children, youth, adults and seniors, and to present the *#AllOnBoard* campaign. *#AllOnBoard* stands for affordable and accessible transit based on income in Metro Vancouver and BC to ensure our communities can access transit to live, work and thrive. Our ask is two-fold: free transit for all children and youth 0-18 and a sliding scale pass based on income for adults, for all transit systems in BC including TransLink. We are also calling for an immediate end to the ticketing of all minors for fare infractions and community service as an alternative option to fare evasion ticketing for adults below the poverty line. The City of Vancouver, Vancouver Parks Board, and Vancouver School Board have passed motions in support of *#AllOnBoard*. We deeply thank all the councillors and trustees who have voted in support of the *#AllOnBoard* ask.

We are a broad alliance of community-based groups, organizations and concerned citizens from municipalities across Metro Vancouver, coming together at this crucial time to build awareness about the issue and strong support for the *#AllOnBoard* ask at this critical time, when poverty reduction and social inclusion is a provincial and federal priority.

To fulfill our vision for a sustainable, green and thriving transit system and shift away from polluting cars, we need to raise life-long transit riders. Our ask is achievable, and the impact of these measures are widely proven in other municipalities across the country and worldwide. The *#AllOnBoard* ask upholds the City of Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy and Greenest City Action Plan. Free transit for all children and youth 0-18 and a sliding scale pass for adults based on income enables youth to get to school and ensures those who are homeless can get to shelters. It means that families will no longer have to make hard choices, folks can get to work without losing the bulk of their hard-earned wages, and everyone can access the health care and libraries they need, when they need it. In the words of one father on income assistance, "I had to choose between transit to get myself to the doctor or buying my daughter milk." It is long overdue for the province and TransLink to address the glaring fact that those who need transit the most are left off the system, and equitable access to our crucial City services such as the Vancouver Public Library is threatened.

It is time to take action and fully build the sustainable and just transit system we need in Metro Vancouver. We need the public, TransLink and the Province of B.C. 'on board' to invest in affordable transit. TransLink is beginning to consider introducing 'equity' in transit planning due to campaign pressure; the tipping point is now. The *Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services* recently cited the need for more affordable transit for youth and families in BC.

We must ensure our most marginalized children, youth and adults can access public libraries when they need them. Thank you for your consideration of our submitted motion, attached. Please find our petition here, <https://you.leadnow.ca/petitions/affordable-transit-for-metro-vancouver>, and a list of our official endorsements and motions here: https://www.allonboard.ca/_allonboard_alliance. Our website: www.allonboard.ca.

Thank you very much, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Viveca Ellis, #AllOnBoard Campaign Organizer; BCPRC + Schula Leonard, retired librarian and campaign volunteer

Vancouver Public Library Board of Directors

Notice of Motion: #AllOnBoard Campaign

WHEREAS the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) Board of Directors 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, access to City services and amenities, school attendance, and labour market inclusion for low income adults and youth; and

WHEREAS the #AllOnBoard campaign, concerned agencies in the City of Vancouver and throughout Metro Vancouver, and directly impacted youth and adult community members have brought to the attention of the VPL Board of Directors the direct harm that is brought to them through the bad credit ratings they develop due to fare evasion ticketing which hinders their access to public services such as libraries. Those living below the poverty line, including many school aged youths and minors who wish to access public services, 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 Vancouver 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 Vancouver and other municipalities, and many pay off 'TransLink debt' and fare evasion fines to TransLink and external collection agencies;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the VPL Board endorse the #AllOnBoard Campaign; the VPL Board write a letter to the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation, the Board of Directors of TransLink, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and the Ministry of Finance, asking TransLink and the various named ministries of 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 based on income as soon as possible in the Metro Vancouver TransLink region and all transit systems in BC to ensure our most at-risk youth and those in poverty can access school, public libraries, and other City services;

THAT the Board 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, and 2) request the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation and TransLink immediately amend existing by-laws and cease ticketing all minors for fare evasion, unlink ICBC from fare evasion for youth and adults, allow low-income adults to access community service as an alternative to the financial penalty of a fare evasion ticket; and implement free transit for youth 0-18 without delay.