

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road, Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8
Phone (250) 475-4106 Fax (250) 475-4112

*Chair: Jordan Watters Vice-Chair: Ann Whiteaker
Trustees: Nicole Duncan, Tom Ferris, Angie Hentze,
Elaine Leonard, Diane McNally, Ryan Painter, Rob Paynter*

June 4, 2019

via email: susan.brice@saanich.ca

Susan Brice, Chair
Victoria Regional Transit Commission

Re: Free Transit Campaign

Dear Chair Brice,

I am writing on behalf of the Greater Victoria School Board to express our support for the Free Transit Campaign and to urge you to implement a pilot program that eliminates user fees for youth 18 years of age and younger. Such a program would increase ridership among young people and families, and thus significantly contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions in the Capital Regional District.

As you are likely aware, transportation is the largest source of community-based CO2 emissions in the region. If we are to significantly reduce our emissions in line with the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's recommendations, we must increase public transportation ridership. We know that user fees are a significant barrier to many of our students, and we believe a pilot program would see broad uptake and result in increased ridership over the long term.

Public transportation has long played a critical role in supporting safe, healthy and connected communities, and we believe that within the context of potentially catastrophic climate change the importance of this role is only growing. We applaud the efforts the Commission has made in recent years to increase transit accessibility, and we urge you to consider taking more steps to support our communities in achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. As noted by the Free Transit Campaign, enhanced transit routes and bus lanes, fleet expansion and electrification, as well as the elimination of user fees are all important actions that the Commission can take as part of a climate action plan.

As a Board, we are inspired by the leadership of our students and their call for bold action on climate change. We urge you to consider heeding their call and show strong forward-looking climate leadership. We will all benefit from such efforts.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

Yours sincerely,



Jordan Watters
Chair, Board of Education

Cc: Board of Education
Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools
Katrina Stride, Acting Secretary-Treasurer
Mayor Helps, City of Victoria
Mayor Haynes, District of Saanich
Mayor Murdoch, District of Oak Bay
Mayor Martin, City of Colwood
Sharmarke Dubow, Councillor, City of Victoria

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One *Learning* Community

