

Project title:

Whose OC Transpo Is This?

Collaborating Organizations (if any): HTC, ACORN, CFAW, TRO

Anticipated project timeline: November 30, 2019

I am/my group is a member in good standing of the Healthy Transportation Coalition for the year of 2018. Yes

What neighbourhood is your work focused on? Overbrook, Bayshore and Vanier

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Project Description: In 300 words, Give us your best description of what this project is. What will you “do”?

My idea is to make a short (10 mins. max) powerful video where members of the precariat and other disadvantaged riders of OC Transpo talk about the effect that the high cost of acquiring the 'low cost products' offered by OC Transpo has on their lives. This initiative seeks to bring the voices of the precariat, of the people living with disabilities and the disadvantaged ridership of OC Transpo into the 'halls and corridors of power.' It could be an important tool for ridership advocates and anti-poverty campaigners.

The high personal and social cost of accessing OC Transpo's 'low cost products' could be more poignant when the case for greater equity in fares is made by disadvantaged riders themselves instead of by the 'usual suspects' the activists and NGO staffer

The idea came to me when earlier this year, I spoke, along with other middle class activists and NGO staffers, at the budget session of the City's Transport Commission. To a person we argued against the proposed 2.5% across the board increase in fares and the fares were frozen but only until the end of 2019!

I kept wondering where are the voices of those actually adversely affected by this rise in fares?

While doing background research for my presentation, I was helped by HTC staff. I could find no information, in the public domain, about the process OC Transpo follows to set fares and the rationale behind the discounts given to various groups of riders.

The case for a fair and equitable fare setting system would be much strengthened if information on policies, guidelines and formulas could be found through an Access to Information request and integrated into the video.

The fight for a fair and equitable fare setting system is not over. It will be debated when the freeze is lifted and again, at budget time in 2020 and when the Transport Master Plan is revised. I hope the video will be part of the campaign.

Planned Outcomes: What are the deliverables of this project?

There is only a single deliverable.

To produce a 10 minute (max) video, using the actual voices of riders who use OC Transpo's Equipass, Community Pass, Seniors and Access Tickets to show how OC Transpo's fare structure discriminates against marginalised populations e.g. men and women of the precariat, living with disabilities, on fixed incomes. Furthermore, the video will propose remedies by showing how other Canadian cities, such as Toronto and Calgary, have integrated their disadvantaged populations into their public transit systems.*

The video could be used to:

kick start a Campaign for an Equitable Fare Structure for OC Transpo this autumn. (There is an across the board fare freeze at 2018 levels until the end of 2019 brought in because of public displeasure at the inability of OC Transpo to deliver on the LRT and the deterioration in the quality of bus services).

Encourage marginalised communities to voice their displeasure through the campaign by speaking to the councillors in their wards and to the Mayor

Encourage riders' advocates and anti-poverty campaigners to pressure OC Transpo Commissioners, City Council including the Mayor and OC Transpo senior staff to the adverse effects of the discriminatory fare structure on the marginalised populations in Ottawa.

* There could be some uncertainty due to the change of government at the provincial level.

How is your initiative important to healthy transportation in Ottawa or Gatineau?

Public transportation are one way of absorbing congestion costs, increasing job and social mobility and decreasing the carbon footprint by reducing dependence on the automobile. Therefore, public transportation is almost a public good therefore justifying cross-subsidies and discounts. Presently, OC Transpo has a fare system that uses discounts based on the Adult (full fare) that privileges age over the ability to pay. The discriminates against disadvantaged sections of the population of Ottawa and limits their ability to access a very essential service.

The initiative fills a very important gap in advocacy for campaigning for an equitable fare system for public transportation. The video aims to get the voices of those most affected by the pricing policy followed by OC Transpo (Equipass Community Pass holders and Access ticket users) front and centre of a campaign for an equitable fare structure in the City of Ottawa.

After funding, what are the steps in your project?

To bring my idea to fruition, would require a combination of planning, dedication, imagination

1. Organise a small project committee of volunteers, set out aims and objectives and a work plan with deliverables and milestones.
2. Recruit videographer and editor
3. Start on archival research
4. Develop script and dialogue-seek approval
5. Film and edit
6. Pilot test (end of summer)
7. Modify/clarify
8. Release and post
9. Copies of the video will be sent to every City Councillor to
10. HTC or any of its allies could put a showing of the video on the agenda of an OC Transpo Commission meeting

11. HTC and its allies such as City for all Women and ACORN could use the video to insist that the question of 'an equitable fare structure which uses income and not age as a determinant for a subsidy' be part of the Transportation Master Plan of the City of Ottawa which is scheduled to be revised sometime this year.

What are key needs that must be met in order for your project to be a success.

1. A spirit of collegiality: give and take on ideas
2. Experienced and dedicated project personnel (paid and volunteers)
3. Strong privacy policy and disclaimers to protect identities of those who provide information or speak on-camera
4. The finished product should not be a mere litany of negatives about OC Transpo but provide a positive message with a strong emphasis on alternative models for fare-setting such as in Calgary and Toronto

What do you anticipate will be some challenges you will encounter in your project?

1. Difficulty in obtaining information from OC Transpo on:
 - ridership, policy and guidelines on fare-setting, formulae on discounting
2. Persuading people to speak to us on camera
3. Balancing artistic and political visions

How can coalition members (individuals or groups) get involved in this project?

1. By serving on the Project Committee
2. Helping to recruit videographer/editor
3. Providing research material, resources, references
4. Publicising the finished product
5. Joining the campaign for Equitable Fares

Anticipated Budget (including existing funding from other sources)

Expense Item	Type	Notes	Amount Requested / Confirmed
Videographer and editor	Staffing		\$ 600.00
Access to Information request			\$150.00
Research costs		(includes photocopying)	\$100.00
Refreshments		(snacks and tea/coffee)	\$ 50.00
Social media ads.	Advertizing		\$ 50.00
Copies for distribution	Advertizing		\$ 100.00
Contingency (10%)			\$ 105.00
Total =			\$1155.00

If you are receiving funding from other sources or anticipate needing to fundraise further, please tell us who and why.

No funding from any other source. Will accept some in-kind contributions from a lawyer on matters relating to privacy and from an expert on access to information.

What kind of non-financial support would you look for from the coalition? (Volunteers, publicity, website space, etc?)

1. Volunteer time
2. Website space for finished product
3. Publicity through HTC, City for all Women and TRO networks

4. Identifying interested people who could use the video for raising awareness of the equity problems in the fare structure of OC Transpo

Will you be able to meet the reporting requirements?

Yes