

# FARE FREE TRANSIT FOR YOUTH INITIATIVE



## Authors

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## 01 BACKGROUND



Research on youth transportation consistently demonstrates that affordability is one of the most significant barriers to transit use. Transit fares can accumulate quickly for young people who rely on daily transportation to attend school, maintain part-time employment, and participate in community activities. According to the Transit for Teens: Parental Perspectives Report, many families report that the cost of transit limits how often youth can travel independently and access essential services (Single Mothers' Alliance BC, 2023). Similarly, municipal research examining youth transit use has found that fare reductions or fare-free programs can significantly increase youth ridership and reduce financial strain on families (Holland et al., 2024, Lattanzi, 2023). These findings highlight how transit affordability plays a critical role in shaping youth mobility patterns and opportunities.

## 02 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objective of the fare-free transit for youth initiative is to reduce financial barriers to public transportation for youth in North Bay. This project aims to enhance equitable access to essential services, including education, employment, healthcare, and community activities. Furthermore, the initiative seeks to promote social inclusion, support positive youth development, and improve overall well-being by increasing mobility and independence. It also intends to encourage sustained public transit use among youth and generate data to inform future transportation policies and programs.

## 03 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will employ a quantitative research design using a structured survey to examine youth perspectives on fare-free transit in North Bay. The target population will consist of youth within the community, from which a sample of approximately 384 participants will be recruited to ensure adequate representation and statistical reliability. Data will be collected through an anonymous questionnaire distributed online and, where possible, in community settings such as schools and youth programs. The survey will include both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to assess transit usage, perceived barriers, and the potential impact of fare-free transit on access to services and overall well-being.

## 04 CONTEXT OF STUDY

This study is situated within the context of transportation accessibility and social equity among youth in North Bay. Many young people face significant barriers to mobility due to limited financial resources and restricted access to private transportation, which can negatively impact their ability to attend school, maintain employment, and access healthcare and social activities. Public transit systems are essential for supporting youth participation in community life; however, associated costs may limit consistent use. In response, fare-free transit initiatives have emerged as a potential strategy to address these inequities. This study therefore examines the role of fare-free transit in enhancing accessibility, promoting social inclusion, and improving overall outcomes for youth within the community.

## 05 POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

The implementation of a fare-free transit initiative for youth in North Bay is expected to result in several positive outcomes.

- Increased access to education and employment opportunities
- Greater social inclusion and community engagement
- Positive mental health and overall well-being
- Increased public transit ridership among youth
- Improved access to healthcare+social services
- Less financial strain

## 06 REFERENCES

- Holland, M. R., Noordegraaf, R., DaCosta, J., & Guan, T. H. (2024). Moving on income as a social determinant of health: Free transit for social assistance recipients in Kingston, Ontario. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 115(1), 111–116. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6417520e104aff63f70b4506/t/6885102d8ac39d6cdbc3e96/1753550900249/Sullivan\\_Veronica-compressed.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6417520e104aff63f70b4506/t/6885102d8ac39d6cdbc3e96/1753550900249/Sullivan_Veronica-compressed.pdf)
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