

From: [A B](#)
To: [Chair of Metrolinx](#)
Subject: Metrolinx and Go Transit's Cheap Passes Not Available to the Poorest Ontarians
Date: February-15-23 7:31:15 AM

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My letter is regarding the following items before the board at the Thursday, February 16, 2023 board meeting:

- 17.1 Payments (PRESTO)
- 19.4 Customer Experience Committee
- 19.7 Payments (PRESTO) Committee

Re: Metrolinx and Go Transit's Cheap Passes Not Available to the Poorest Ontarians

I am writing to express my dismay at the unfair barriers Metrolinx (parent company of Go Transit) places in the ways of low-income Ontarians, seniors, and the homeless. Metrolinx has a mandate to provide an economical public transit that is open, accessible, and inclusive of all people. Yet, Metrolinx passes (the \$10 Weekend Day Pass, \$15 Weekend Unlimited Pass, and Weekday Group Pass) are only available for purchase online through a smartphone with a data plan. There is no good reason why these cheap passes --which can help an individual or family save up to 50% or more of the standard fare cost-- cannot be available to EVERYONE simply through the use of the widely-accepted Presto cards.

Unfortunately, many low-income Ontarians, seniors and homeless people struggle to make ends meet and can not afford a smartphone with a data plan. In fact, approximately 10% of Canadians do not have a smartphone for personal use (Statistics Canada). Canada is already notorious for having some of the world's highest cellphone service fees and data fees. Excluding low-income Ontarians, seniors, and the homeless who cannot afford smartphones and data plans from accessing Metrolinx passes presents an insurmountable barrier precisely to the people who stand to benefit the most from these highly economical passes. These passes could make life immensely more affordable for low-income Ontarians, seniors, and the homeless in this time of sky-rocketing prices. Again, they can help an individual or family up to save 50% or more of the standard fare cost. Yet, people of limited means are shut out and left standing in the cold.

I have been in contact with Metrolinx and Go Transit on this issue of gross inequity for months. In December, 2022, I spoke with a Go Transit Station Ambassador who stated that they have heard many complaints from riders that the passes are only available with a smart phone with a data plan. Then, I called Go Transit Customer Service and asked them to please remove this needless and unfair economic barrier. The person I spoke with said they are still waiting after many months for Metrolinx to make available other means for people to access those passes. It is now mid-February, 2023 and unfortunately, nothing has happened. Metrolinx must be responsive to its mandate to provide open, accessible, and inclusive service for all.

Please immediately make the passes available for use on PRESTO cards.

Relevant websites:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=2210011501>

<https://www.gotransit.com/en/travelling-with-us/promotions-and-events/weekend-passes-with-go>

<https://www.metrolinx.com/en/news/new-weekday-group-pass-lets-customers-save-on-go-transit-trips>

Thank you,

A.B.

(I am available immediately for further comments on this issue. I am only an email away. Thank you for your time.)