

Mary T. Hynes
416-444-7886
marythynes@rogers.com

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I am a senior, live in North York and use public transit about four days a week. Unlike many of my senior friends, I have adequate, though not extensive, pension income. For me an increase of 5 to 10 cents will be an annoyance and an inconvenience.

For many of my friends, and for most of the seniors I come in contact with, any increase will be devastating.

Trips to the doctors or shopping will increasingly be weighed against turning on lights or heat.

I'm sure you know as concerned citizens that isolation, especially among seniors, is a serious mental health issue. If visiting friends or going to community centres would mean less money for food or other necessities, then more seniors will remain homebound. The social costs will eventually be financial costs to the health care system.

There is another group of residents of this city who are over-burdened by TTC fares – the disabled on ODSP or other limited funding. I know this because I have a multiply disabled son on ODSP. His income is many times smaller than mine but he pays full fare while I don't.

If you want to do the right thing you will lower, not hold steady on fares for the disabled.

I know that Wheel-Trans rides are way more expensive than standard trips. My son is fortunate in that he is able to use buses and accessible subways except when we have major winter storms. And he does. He values his independence and he has a strong social conscience.

The TTC needs to promote use of standard travel use instead of Wheeltrans by the disabled – more locations where Wheeltrans users can transfer to TTC and buses, speed up the stalled accessibility of subway stations, promotion of standard transit to Wheeltrans users who are able to make the change (and especially for new Wheeltrans users).

Of course the city needs to increase its subsidy and the province should be doing its share. We the people need to pressure all three levels of government to support the operation of public transit financially. I am so tired of announcements (especially by the federal government) of money to build transit without funding for maintenance and operation.

It is most unfortunate that the city has decided to build a limited Scarborough subway without the provincial operational funding we would have gotten for the more extensive Scarborough LRT. But that's a different fight.

In closing I want to emphasize that user pay is no way to run a public SERVICE. We need to work together to create a better funding model for Toronto. Meanwhile, do not raise fares but instead reduce fares for disabled users.

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