

# Free Public Transportation For Students

Colten Rockford and Cael Read

# Background

- Previous delegation with Mari Nielsen and Rowan Moore in December 2019
  - Actions planned; died off with COVID
  - Change of ridership and Route 90
  - Now requesting inclusion of post-secondary students
- Climate emergency; 32% of our emissions come from on-road transportation
- School bus needs more help
  - Public bus can be faster than school bus
- Many students are uncomfortable with the bus
  - Due to lack of popular usage, but is subject to change

# Why to make public transit free for students



# Equity

Ensuring equal access  
to opportunity



- Bus fares unjustly affect low income families
  - Their children have lower access to mobility
- Can provide equal opportunity
  - Jobs
  - Community resources
  - More free time from faster school transit
  - Recreation and social life

# Environment

- Responsibility to act on climate change
- Busses are less emissions intensive than cars
  - 30% less emissions per passenger at average occupancy, up to 80% less
- Promoting wider public transit use combats climate change



# Investment

- Removal of fee leads to greater bus use
  - Leads to greater ridership, then toward youth social acceptance
- Increase of users grants opportunity to improve routes and frequency
  - Upgrading bus service to an esteemed community service
- Decrease in traffic leads to shorter transit times
- Can generate more revenue in the future
  - Or, if later free for all, benefits to tourism

# Routes to Implementation



# How Students Would Board the Bus

## Option 1:

- Students receive Umo cards
  - Would receive from school or apply
  - Cards would last one year and could be renewed with annually

## Option 2:

- Students use Student ID to board bus
  - Less cards overall; convenient
  - Cards with Umo RFIDs to 'tap' into buses
  - Would require coordination w/SD46 and BC Transit



# Bus Drivers in Schools



- Need to ensure familiarity with buses
- Existing “Kids Ride the Bus” program
  - Effective to teach students when they’ll be more comfortable w/bus use
- Bring bus drivers into schools to explain system
  - Gives a friendly face too

# Needs Further Study

- Need to create an accurate estimate of cost, in lost revenue
  - No cost in lost revenue for resulting new riders
- Currently have no data on youth ridership
  - Only know numbers of students in Sunshine Coast
    - 1250 Elphinstone, Chatelech, and SCAS students
    - ~150 CapU kálah-ay and commuting students
- Will be able to gain data, then an estimate, with upcoming Umo rollout
- Also recommend a select committee/focus group with students

Thank you for considering  
this investment