SPUR Transit + Design

TransLink’s Transit Fare Review

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For  SPUR
By  Andrew Devlin, Manager Policy Development, TransLink; Gordon Ross, VP, OXD
Date  June 26-27, 2019
Hi, we’re Andrew and Gord!
Agenda

Today’s session

1. Introductions
2. TransLink and the Transit Fare Review
3. Design for Policy
4. Reflections and lessons learned
5. Discussion
Introducing Translink
TransLink is Metro Vancouver’s regional transit and transportation authority.

Every day we move over 400,000 people on our transit system.
About Translink

TransLink, by the numbers

- $2.0 billion operating budget, $5.0 billion assets
- $500 million fare revenue
- 7,000 employees
- 1,800 km sq service area (695 miles sq)
- 21 municipalities
- 436 million boardings per year (7.1% increase in 2018)
And introducing OXD
About OXD

OXD is an end-to-end design and technology consulting firm.

We work with complex organizations to build up their internal capabilities while bringing new digital products and services to life.
We’ve helped industry leaders design for—and with—their customers to build digital services that people love to use.
The Transit Fare Review
Transit Fare Review

The problem

Current fare structure largely unchanged since the mid 1980’s and was perceived as unfair, inflexible, and not reflective of how people travel.

Example:
All of these rapid transit trips are different lengths but are charged a two-zone fare of $3.25. Similar examples exist for one- and three-zone trips.
The opportunity

New possibilities to move towards a fare system that can work better for more people with Compass smartcard payment system.
We wanted to review all the ways we price transit

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Transit Fare Review</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>We wanted to review all the ways we price transit</strong></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Distance Travelled</strong></th>
<th>The price you pay depending on how far you travel</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Service Type</strong></td>
<td>The price you pay depending on what mode of transit you use</td>
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<td><strong>Time of Day</strong></td>
<td>The price you pay depending on what time of day you travel</td>
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<td><strong>Fare Products</strong></td>
<td>The type of ticket or pass you purchase based on frequency of travel</td>
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<td><strong>Discounts</strong></td>
<td>The reduced fares available to riders based on defined eligibility criteria</td>
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<td><strong>Transfer Time</strong></td>
<td>How many minutes you can travel on a single fare</td>
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Transit Fare Review

Goal of the review

Explore changes to the fare structure that promotes exceptional customer experience where paying for transit...

- Is simple
- Is fair
- Is affordable
- Helps grow ridership
- Helps improve service by reducing overcrowding
- Maintains revenue from fares to help pay for service
Phase 1
Mid 2016
Discover the issues

Phase 2
Early 2017
Define the broad range of options

Phase 3
Late 2017
Develop the best options

Phase 4
Mid 2018
Finalize the recommendation

Stakeholder & Public Consultation

What do you like & dislike about the current system? What objectives should we have for a future system?

Which of the many options do you prefer?

Which of the fewer refined options do you prefer?

What do you think about the recommendation and how can we make it better?
Transit Fare Review

Complex policy problems require many tools

- **Modelling and analysis** to understand revenue and ridership impacts
- **Best practices and industry trends** to understand what’s worked elsewhere (or not) and why
- **Broad engagement and consultation** to solicit input at every step of the process
- **User experience research and prototyping** to “test drive” policy options, learn and iterate
- **Structured decision making** to ensure a defensible, rigorous and transparent process
Transit Fare Review

How did we make use of user experience research and prototyping?

● **Understand pain/pinch points** in ways you can’t do through static surveys alone.

● **Refine our options**; what looks good on paper or in a model might have fatal flaws in a real world application.

● **Bring first-hand insight to technical analysis** in order to have a more comprehensive suite of information to make decisions on
Transit Fare Review

Where did we land?

A balance between transformative and incremental changes.

- Move from zone system to distance-based/pay by station system
- Keep prepaid passes, but increase choice and options
- Expand time of day pricing structure
- Work with partners to deliver expanded discounts for low-income riders
Design for Policy
Product

Service
Typically intangible, having no physical form, distributed in space and time

Cannot be owned; artifacts involved in delivering are owned

Cannot be stored or perish

Consumed as they are produced and sold

Customer needs to be present for service to be delivered

Highly varied: banking, eating at a restaurant, taking the bus

Economically dominant; 80% of USA’s GDP (70% Canada)
User Experience

Experience between person and single touchpoint, usually a digital product

Service Experience

Orchestrated experience among all parts of the service, from people to objects to places to interfaces

Source: Jamin Hegeman, VP, Capital One Design, Designing for Multi-Touchpoint Experiences
Design for Policy
The value of Design for Policy

1. Different approaches to understanding the public’s problems
2. Co-design and collaboration with stakeholders in policy options
3. Devices that can give form to policy in practice
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Prototyping policy?
Options for varying fares by distance travelled

**D1. Flat by distance**

- System-Wide Flat Fare
- Eliminate boundary issues altogether by pricing all trip distances the same.

**D2. Refined zones**

- Refine zone system to address boundary issues through:
  - A. Overlapping zones to soften the sharp zone boundary edge
  - B. More zones so increase in price is gradual
  - C. Two-zone base fare where first zone boundary crossing does not incur an additional cost

**D3. Measured distance**

- Vary fares based on the measured distance between journey origin and destination using either:
  - A. Kilometres
  - B. Number of stops/stations
Reflections
Andrew’s takeaways

- New tools need time to socialize and demonstrate value
- Design works best when paired with other methods
- Design is best applied as early as possible
Gord’s takeaways

- Qualitative methods in a quantitative world: explanation does not mean prediction
- How do we negotiate preference, explanation, and usage when understanding policy options?
- Without a service, does policy exist?
Thank you

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