

Transit Fare Review

Phase 2 Discussion Guide

January 2017

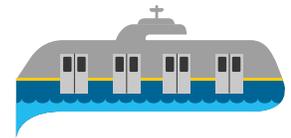


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Transit Fare Review

Phase 2 Discussion Guide

How should we determine transit fares in Metro Vancouver?

HAVE YOUR SAY!

In Phase 1 of the Transit Fare Review, we heard from nearly 30,000 people who shared their concerns, issues and ideas. Overall, we heard strong support for taking a fresh look at the way we determine transit fares in Metro Vancouver.

With the introduction of Compass in 2015, we now have an unprecedented opportunity to address longstanding concerns, provide a better customer experience and grow ridership.

You can find details of what we learned in the [Phase 1 Summary Report](#).

ABOUT THE TRANSIT FARE REVIEW

Now in Phase 2 of the Transit Fare Review, we've defined the main options for each of the three key structural components. Have your say on the possible ways to vary fares by: 1) Distance travelled; 2) Time of travel; and 3) Service type.

Learn more by reading the discussion guide or watching our online videos. Then let us know what you think by taking the survey and participating in our online discussion forum, which will be open between January 30 and February 17, 2017. You can find all of this at translink.ca/farereview.

We'll use your feedback to develop a combined shortlist in Phase 3.

Will the Transit Fare Review result in increased transit fares?

As a result of the Transit Fare Review, fares for some trips may go up and fares for other trips may go down. However, the approach when comparing fare options is to maintain the same overall amount of fare revenue.

Figure 1: Transit Fare Review Timeline

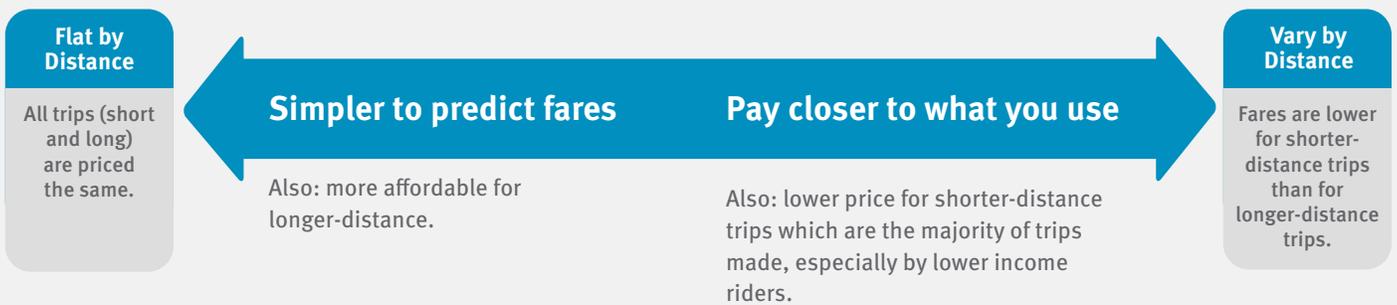


1. Varying Fares by Distance Travelled

This component refers to how fares vary based on the origin and destination of a transit journey.

RATIONALE

The spectrum below explains why you might choose or not choose to vary fares by distance.



CURRENT SYSTEM

Today, customers pay more for each zone boundary they cross. All bus and HandyDART travel temporarily operates under one-zone; SkyTrain and SeaBus under three zones; and West Coast Express operates under its own five-zone structure.



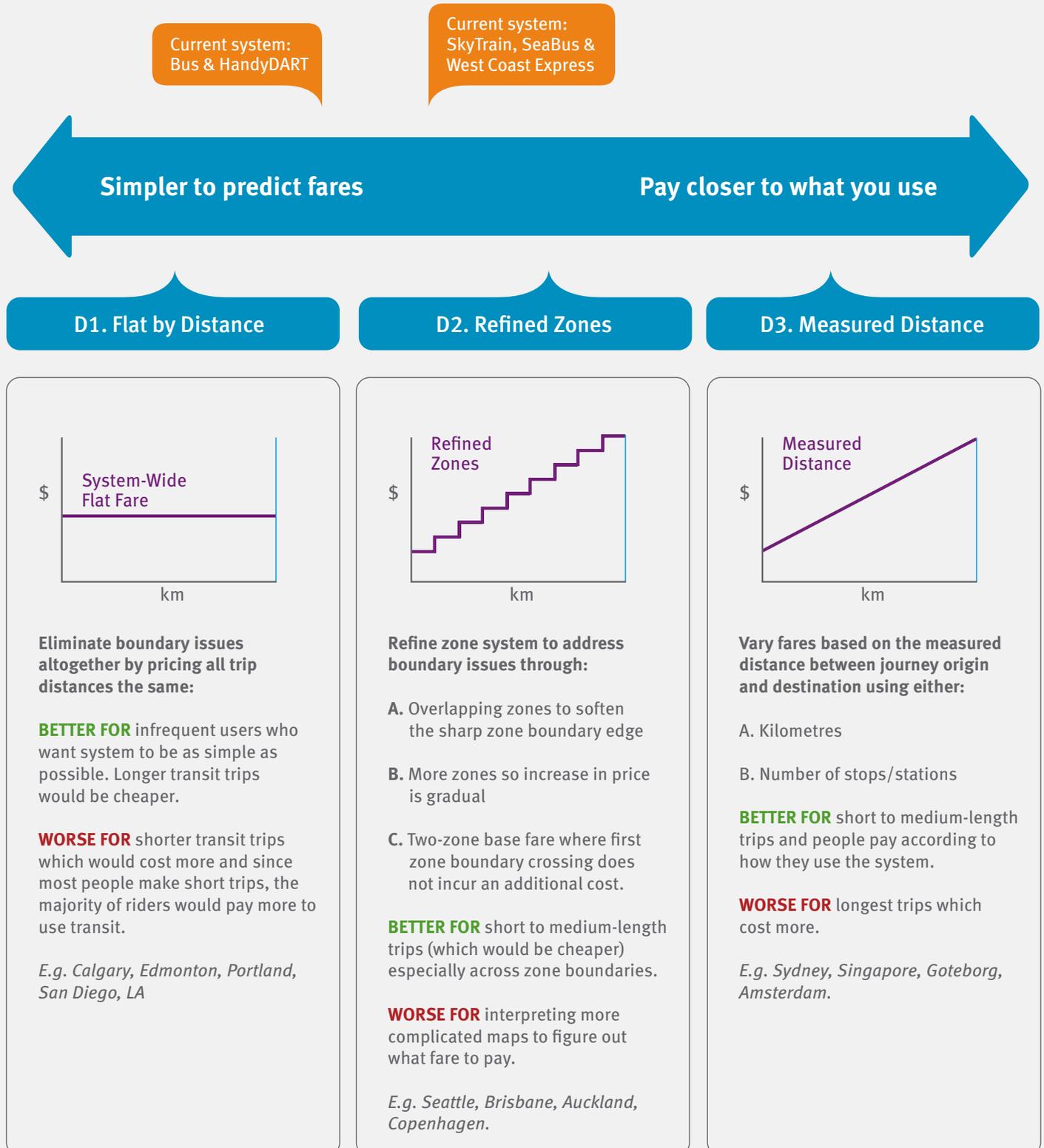
ISSUES RAISED IN PHASE 1

Based on research and consultation in Phase 1, the following key issues emerged regarding our current approach to pricing by distance travelled:

- a. Large zones don't accurately reflect distance travelled.
- b. People making short trips across a zone boundary must pay a two-zone fare.
- c. Trips of similar lengths may be more expensive by SkyTrain and SeaBus than by bus.

OPTIONS FOR VARYING PRICE BY DISTANCE TRAVELLED

The table below defines the range of options for varying fares by distance travelled.

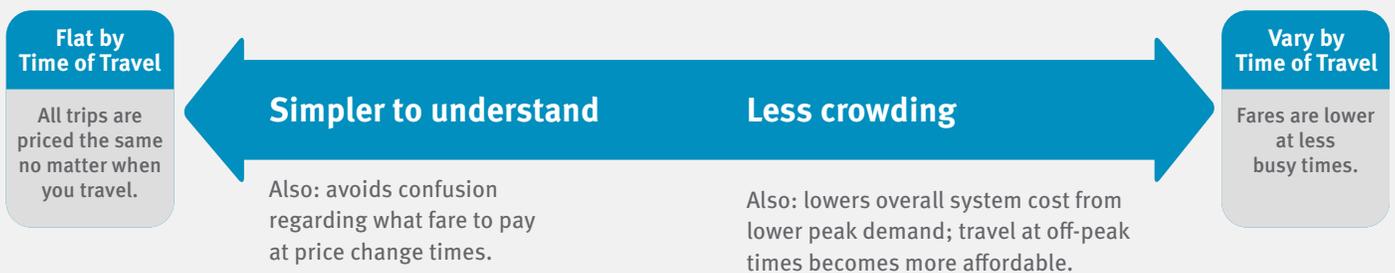


2. Varying Fares by Time of Travel

This component refers to how fares vary based on the time of day, which is a way to reflect the level of demand on the transit system. Most transit systems experience an influx of riders during a few hours on weekday mornings and weekday afternoons, known as the “AM Peak” and “PM Peak.” Outside of these peak periods, the transit system has less demand, less crowding and more available capacity to accommodate new trips without having to add expensive new vehicles.

RATIONALE

The spectrum below explains why you might choose or not choose to vary fares by the time of day that you travel.

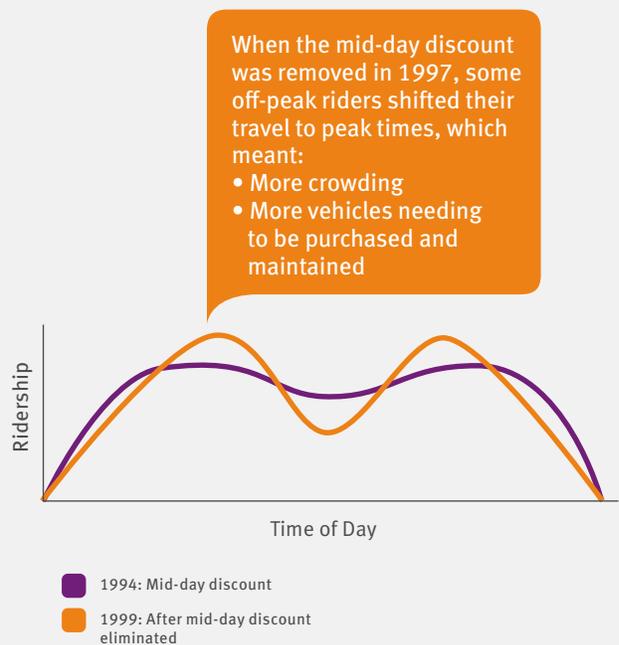


CURRENT SYSTEM

Today, customers travelling outside of peak times, after 6:30 p.m. on weekdays and all day weekends and holidays, pay a one-zone fare.

Prior to 1997, there was a mid-day discount on public transit fares. After it was removed in 1997, there was no longer a price incentive for travellers with flexible schedules to travel during the mid-day instead of during the peak. As a result, demand for transit increased during the most expensive times to serve and decreased during the less expensive time to serve (See Figure 2). This example shows how a simple fare policy change can have a major impact on system costs, crowding and passenger comfort.

Figure 2: Ridership by hour on a weekday, 1994 and 1999 before and after removal of mid-day discount in 1997



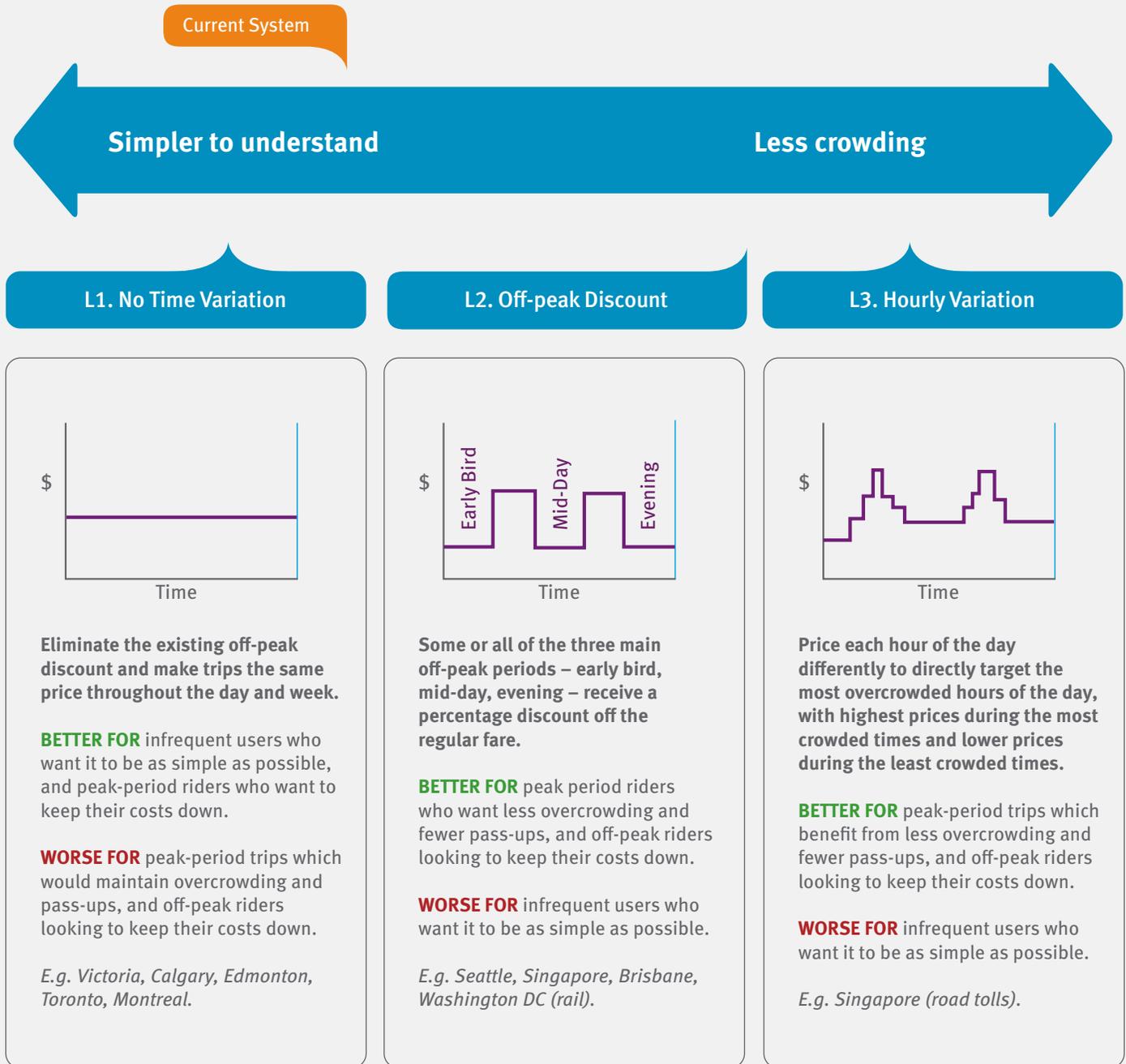
ISSUES RAISED IN PHASE 1

Based on research and consultation in Phase 1, the following key issues emerged:

- a. Two-thirds of journeys are made using “unlimited” pass products that have no incentive to shift to less busy times.
- b. There is no price incentive for those travelling just one-zone, which make up 80% of all trips on transit, to delay their travel to the evening off-peak period because only riders travelling two or three zones benefit from the off-peak discount.
- c. There is no price incentive to shift morning trips to before or after the morning peak period. Even though the morning peak period is sharper (fewer hours) and more pronounced (higher spike), we currently only offer a discount in the evenings.
- d. Our current system applies the off-peak discount system-wide rather than to specific locations or directions where overcrowding is most severe. Overcrowding does not occur evenly across our system at the same times.

OPTIONS FOR VARYING PRICE BY TIME OF TRAVEL

The table below defines the range of options for varying fares by weekday time of travel.



3. Varying Fares by Service Type

Urban regions often deploy a number of transit service types (E.g. rapid transit, commuter rail, bus, ferry, paratransit, etc.) in order to serve different kinds of trips.

RATIONALE

The spectrum below explains why you might choose or not choose to vary fares by service type.



CURRENT SYSTEM

Today, there is one set of prices for bus, SkyTrain, and SeaBus. The West Coast Express is a higher priced premium service. HandyDART, which provides door-to-door service for customers who are unable to use other service types without assistance, is priced the same as bus for adults but does not accept concession fares.

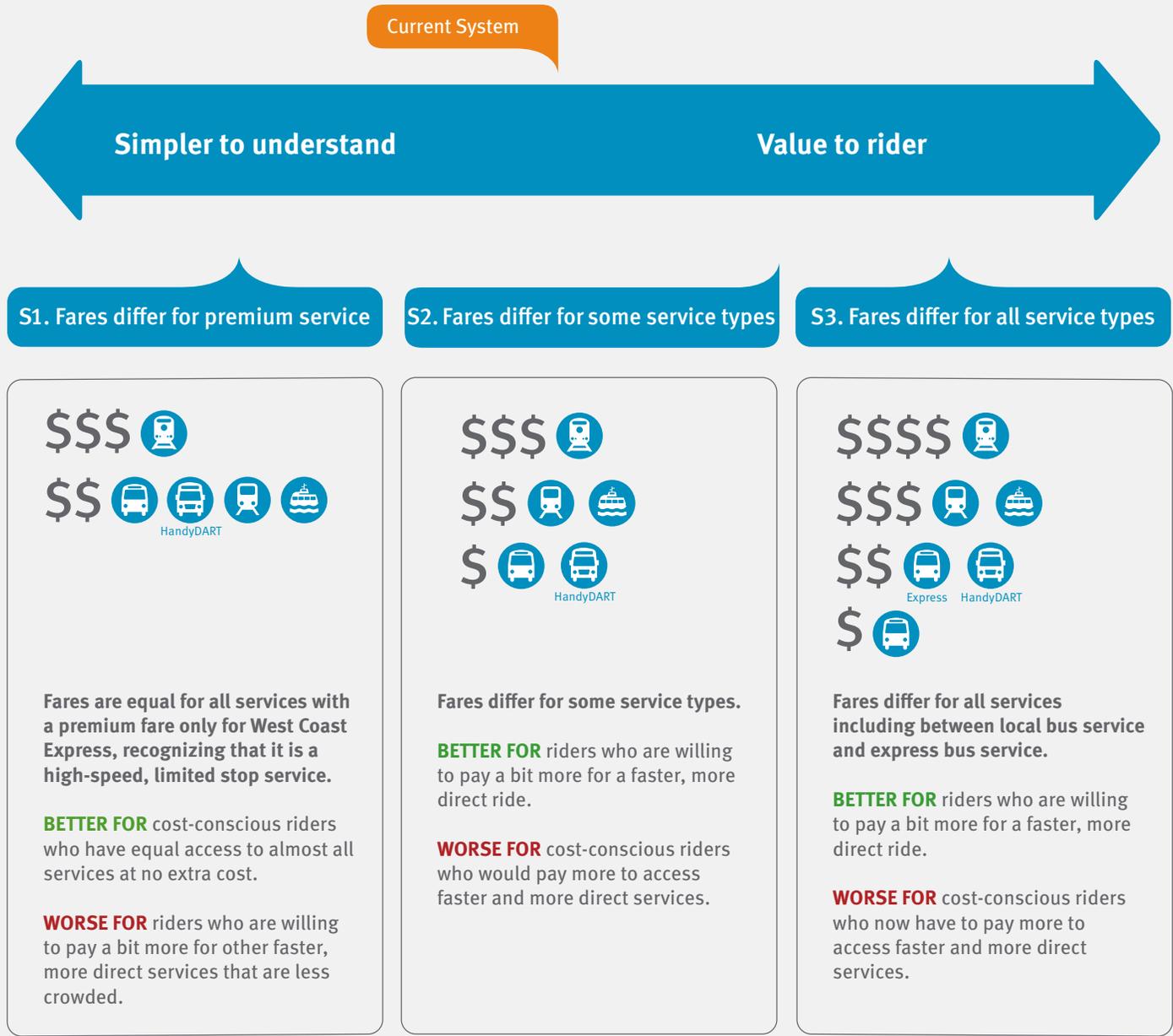
b. The temporary removal of zones on buses has resulted in perceptions of unfairness, for example between bus and SkyTrain/SeaBus for journeys that cross a fare zone boundary. This is perceived as a problem mainly by transit riders who use rapid transit for all or part of their regular journeys.

ISSUES RAISED IN PHASE 1

a. While West Coast Express has a premium fare, other services such as SkyTrain are charged at the same rate as a bus (if travel is within the same fare zone) despite SkyTrain being faster and more frequent.

OPTIONS FOR VARYING FARES BY SERVICE TYPE

There are three main options presented for varying fares by service type for the conventional transit system.



APPENDIX: Varying Fares by Product Type, User Type and Journey Time

UPCOMING COMPONENTS FOR FEEDBACK

Once we narrow down the major structure-forming decisions in terms of distance, time of day, and service type – we will consider three additional fare policy components in the next phase: 4) product types, 5) discounts for different riders, and 6) rules about connections between services.

This Appendix briefly discusses the range of options for these last three components.

VARYING FARES BY PRODUCT TYPE

There are five distinct approaches to fare products used in transit systems around the world:

- **Pay-as-you-go products** – Where trips are paid for individually.
- **Period Passes** – Prepaid, multiple use passes available in different time increments (e.g. daily, monthly).
- **Fare capping** – Fares are ‘capped’ providing free unlimited travel after a set amount of usage or dollar value is surpassed.
- **Percentage Discount Pass** – A prepaid flat fee allowing for a percentage discount off the regular fare price.
- **Off-Peak Pass** – Allows for unlimited travel in off-peak periods, with regular fares required for peak periods.

VARYING FARES BY USER TYPE

Transit ridership is diverse, and each user has different needs and abilities to pay for transit.

It is common for transit agencies to offer discounted fares based on user categories considering factors such as:

1. **Different types of users have different abilities to pay**
2. **Discounting fares for younger people helps foster a transit culture**
3. **Making transit fares more competitive with driving for some groups of people**

VARYING FARES ACCORDING TO JOURNEY TIMES AND CONNECTION RULES

Metro Vancouver’s transit system was designed as an integrated, connected network that transports riders from origin to destination in the most efficient way possible. This means that riders must often make a connection (or transfer) between transit vehicles to complete a journey.

Connections allow people to move between and within areas of the region on one fare, and to complete their journeys by using the quickest and most convenient combination of transit service types.

Since 1981, TransLink’s fares have had a 90-minute transfer window, which allows the rider to transfer onto other transit services for up to 90 minutes from the time a fare is first used. Depending on which options are chosen in Phase 2, other options for connection rules may need to be explored in a future phase.

