

A Vision for Movement, Opportunity, and Shared Prosperity.

Every year, DC spends hundreds of millions on roads, sidewalks, and bridges—all free at the point of use. No one pays a toll to walk down a sidewalk. Yet we ask transit riders—predominantly Black, lower-income essential workers—to pay every time they move through their own city. **That is a policy choice.** We are making a different one.

WHO PAYS TODAY?

84% of DC bus riders are DC residents—already paying taxes to support the system.

60% of DC bus riders are Black. Fares are a racial equity issue.

68% of bus riders earn under \$50,000. Fares are regressive.

91% of fare evasion citations go to Black residents. We criminalize economic hardship.

East of 16th St: families spend 15–20% of income on transportation.

WHAT CHANGES?

Fare-Free DC eliminates fares on all Metrobus and Metrorail for DC residents. Not a discount program.

Free at the point of use—the same way we provide libraries, parks, and public schools.

How it works:

1. Register online or at any library branch. Five minutes.
2. Your SmarTrip card is activated for free rides.
3. Tap and ride. Every bus. Every train. \$0.

No means testing. No income verification. If you live in DC, you ride free.

THE PLAN



PHASE 1: FREE METROBUS

All DC routes. 300,000 daily riders. Immediate household savings.



PHASE 2: FREE METRORAIL

Trips to/from DC stations free for residents. Full system access.



PHASE 3: FULL REGIONAL

Free rides anywhere in the WMATA system for DC residents

HOW WE PAY FOR IT

DC approved \$1.1 billion for a football stadium. Fare-Free DC costs \$350M/year to serve 400,000 daily riders, 365 days a year. This is about priorities. The program is funded through diversified revenue sources.

- **Better deals on Metro's infrastructure** — cell and tech companies pay to use Metro tunnels and stations for 5G and broadband. They already do this in New York. We're leaving tens of millions on the table.
- **Drivers who benefit from less traffic help pay** — congestion pricing for driving downtown during rush hour, plus small increases ride-hail charges and vehicle registration. DC residents riding free transit avoid the charge entirely.
- **Visitors and companies, not residents** — Airbnb surcharges, tour operator fees, and delivery vehicle fees paid by Amazon, FedEx, and UPS. Not by you.
- **Money we already collect, spent smarter** — traffic camera revenue redirected to transit after funding safety programs, plus a modest shift in the General Fund and federal grant dollars.

We bring in more than we spend. Annual costs are capped with public quarterly reviews.

WHERE IT'S WORKING

MoCo MD Went fare-free June 2025 with 400 buses across 80 routes.

Alexandria VA Fare-free since 2021. Record ridership every year. 5+ million rides annually.

Kansas City 31% ridership increase, economic growth in underserved areas

Boston 38% increase on free equity routes

MA Governor funded 13 transit systems to go fare-free.

"We spend hundreds of millions on roads, sidewalks, and bridges — all free. We can do the same for transit. This is not radical. This is infrastructure that works for everyone."
— Gary Goodweather