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Subject: Should Public Transit Be Free? NYTimes

Citywide Transportation Advisory Committee

This makes too much sense and could go a long way not only towards reducing road congestion but also lower carbon emissions. A hop-on, hop-off bus in downtown Bend circling to the Old Mill would substantially reduce traffic and parking congestion throughout the route.

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Should Public Transit Be Free? More Cities Say, Why Not?

Mayors are considering waiving fares for bus service as a way to fight inequality and lower carbon emissions. Critics wonder who will pay for it.

By [Ellen Barry](#) Jan. 14, 2020

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/14/us/free-public-transit.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_200116?campaign_id=2&instance_id=15127&segment_id=20368&user_id=b1a55847385bbc26c13e37bbbb049bb7®i_id=299453020116

LAWRENCE, Mass. — Dionisia Ramos gets on the 37 bus twice a day, rooting through her handbag to dig out the fare and drop it into the slot, so it came as a shock several months ago when the bus driver reached out his hand to stop her.

“You don’t have to pay,” he said. “It’s free for the next two years.”

Ms. Ramos had never heard of anything like this: Someone was paying her bus fare? At 55, she lives on a monthly unemployment check for \$235. So saving \$2.40 a day, for her trip to and from community college, past the hulking mills of Lawrence’s industrial past — that meant something.

“Transportation should be free,” she said. “It’s a basic need. It’s not a luxury.”

That argument is bubbling up in lots of places these days, as city officials cast about for big ideas to combat inequality and reduce carbon emissions. Some among them cast transportation as a pure public good, more like policing and less like toll roads.

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Around 100 cities in the world offer free public transit, the vast majority of them in Europe, especially France and Poland.

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