

Gated community

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After first clawing back their transit passes, TransLink minister Peter Fassbender, rode to the rescue of people with disabilities this week, telling TransLink it must keep its SeaBus and SkyTrain fare gates open until it can show the gates won't be an impediment to people facing mobility challenges.

The transit authority had announced plans to slam the gates shut in April - and that people whose disabilities made using the gates difficult or impossible would have to call ahead to receive an attendant's help.

Our ability to freely move around from one place to another is critical to our quality of life. For those of us who have no difficulties, it's something that's easy to take for granted. People with disabilities don't deserve any more challenges than what they've already got to contend with.

But this latest episode in the fare gate boondoggle raises a big question: How, in 2016, are we building public facilities that aren't accessible for all people, regardless of physical impairment?

It's a question we'd love to put to TransLink's unelected, unaccountable board.

But, lest we lay all the blame on the poor, beleaguered TransLink, we mustn't forget to point out that fare gates were probably a bad idea to begin with.

TransLink's own staff advised that installing gates would cost far more than it could ever recoup by preventing fare evasion. But, then-transportation minister Kevin Falcon insisted, and here we are today - \$100 million in the hole with gates that won't work.

TransLink was hoping to close the gates on April 8. We guess April 1 would have been a little too on the nose.

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