

Jaime Lenz

Dear Trustees

My name is Jaime Lenz. I live at Spilsbury Rd and Lougheed highway. The school bus for my family is an integral part of running our days effectively. We plan our days knowing that we have a bus to safely get our children to school and then return them all while my husband and I go about our business. When my oldest son started school at Whonnock Elementary I had to beg for the catchment to be changed for three years just to get him on a bus. We finally got bus service when he was in the third grade. Then my second son joined him the next year. Now all four of my children are taking busses and I have the freedom to ramp up my business as well my husband and I are in the process of opening a restaurant in Gastown. With this new development I will have to be in downtown Vancouver for a good portion of my time and it was nice to know that my oldest son would be home to watch his siblings while my husband and I were hard at work. Without a bus to fill that incredibly key role I will have to be at home to become a taxi service instead of providing for my family which is completely opposite to the reason for buying a restaurant. For years I have worked from home and had to adjust my client's schedules in order to make what money I could. The prospect of having to continue in this fashion is beyond frustrating since we have been living on mainly one income for 15 years, which is not easy in an every increasingly expensive area. Now when I come so close to giving my family a little breathing room I have to contend with a fight over cutting busses. I have no other options in this matter since there is no public transit for even my Garibaldi bound son and I would NEVER let my younger children (11, 7 & 6) walk to Whonnock Elementary. I have walked up the street to get my mail and had a bear follow me. I only knew because a car drove up behind me and honked to scare it away. This is an area where everyone is very "bear aware" but they still live here because it is wooded. As well we live with country roads that have blind corners, no sidewalks, very few street lights and insane drivers. I am insulted that after 240th street we are considered non citizens and don't matter enough to be given any consideration. There is no "efficiency" in cancelling busses there is only stress and strife for parents. It is nothing but buck passing. Efficiency is working out how to maximize what you have to work with. Much like I do when trying to budget to pay my mortgage, feed my family and give my kids some measure of happiness. Why can we not work together to create bus routes that make sense and fill the busses? Why am I seeing 5 busses pass my door step. My kids all manage to ride in a car together, why can they not on a bus? Centralize some of the stops, change the distance to walk to school to 2.6 km like other school districts to maximize the number of children taking the bus. I was born here and in my day if you were on the route you got on the bus! Stagger the bell times more and have teens make transfers from elementary school busses to high school busses. Why are we falling into step with every other school district when we can be a leader in actually making changes for all of them? I have always had pride in my school district because they did do things that made far more sense than others but now I have to wonder what has happened to stunt the thinking of the people in charge. You have 300 families to help you and that's based on last years numbers. We don't even know how many are effected for next year! Please help us and I can guarantee the parents you serve will reciprocate in kind.

Sincerely
Jaime Lenz