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Free fare zone to be extended?

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31 January 2011 05:25

As three Calgary aldermen push to extend the LRT free-fare zone one stop south to Victoria-Stampede station, some local businesses near the northwest line are asking for the same reprieve.

Removing fare requirements for Sunnyside station — the first stop after 7th Avenue on the northwest line — would provide added incentive for shoppers in the nearby Kensington district, said Jonathan Kane, owner of The Naked Leaf.

"Anything that helps increase traffic to small and private business is only beneficial," he said.

Karen Vogl, a manager at The Cat's Pyjamas, agrees, "It would be excellent. Our major problem in this area is lack of parking — a lot of people hesitate to come down here with a car."

But Ald. Ray Jones, who is pitching the Victoria extension along with Aids. Andre Chabot and Diane Colley-Urquhart, said the proposal is meant to aid groups hosting events at the BMO Centre on the Stampede grounds.

"It's not about shopping," he said. "It's about trade space for people that are coming from other parts of the world to do a convention or a trade show."

Metro Calgary



Jeremy Nolais/METRO

Jonathan Kane, owner of Kensington's The Naked Leaf, said free LRT service to the Sunnyside Station would allow his business to compete with malls offering free parking and other options.