

2011-2012 YOUTH COMMISSION

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Multnomah County Board of Commissioners YouthPass Briefing

Program Overview

- YouthPass provides a **free transit pass to PPS students** for use during the school year.
- The Multnomah Youth Commission was a key driver in creating a pilot program at Jefferson, Franklin, and Roosevelt in the 2008/09 school year. (approx. 2,200 students).
- As a result of the successful pilot, **TriMet, Portland Public Schools (PPS)**, and the **City of Portland** expanded the program to **all 13,000 PPS high-school students** in 2009/10.
- The goal of the YouthPass program is to lower barriers to youth involvement in school, out-of-school activities, and employment, while also reducing our carbon footprint, cutting traffic, and building a new generation of transit users.
- YouthPass aligns with the Mayor's Education and Sustainability priorities as well as PPS long-term high school redesign.
- According to a fall **2009 PPS survey**:
 - **Only 43.8% of students reported using TriMet to get to school prior to Youth Pass.**
 - **After Youth Pass, 80% of students reported regularly riding TriMet** (defined as "a couple of times a week" or "almost every day")
 - 73.2% report using TriMet "often" to **get to or from school**
 - 45% of students "often" use TriMet to get **to after-school activities**
 - 24% of students "often" use TriMet to get **to a job**
 - **Youth Pass contributes to greater equity among marginalized groups:** Ridership is higher at schools with high concentrations of student of color and students of poverty, and at alternative schools that serve at-risk population
- The Multnomah Youth Commission has continued to work with TriMet on its "Respect the Ride" and "Stay Alert, Stay Alive" marketing campaigns. Youth Commissioners provide outreach on behalf of TriMet at all PPS high schools during their back-to-school registration days.

YouthPass Revenue Model (2009-2011)

- Total program cost is approximately \$3.5 million in FY 2010/11 based on purchasing monthly youth transit passes for 13,000 students which includes the full cost of the ride (an internal TriMet calculation based on all operating expenses), not just the cost of the pass.
- The program was primarily funded through the Business Energy Tax Credit (**BETC**) (**\$2.55 million**). The tax credit is based on Tri-Met's cost per boarding (\$3.85), and it was sold to one or more "pass-through-partners" that have an equivalent tax liability.
- The City was responsible for any lost revenue from unsold tax credits. As a comparator, the City routinely sells \$2.5 million in tax credits to fund its transportation options program.
- Additional funding is provided by **PPS** based on what they would spend to provide transportation under current policies (Free & Reduced Lunch and No Child Left Behind) (**approx. \$800k**).

Current status

- In June of 2011, the Oregon Legislature decided to no longer allow energy tax credits to be used for student transit pass programs throughout the state (Lane and Marion counties also had similar programs). No alternatives were provided and thus the primary funding source for YouthPass has been eliminated.
- The current program ends on December 31, 2011
- The Multnomah Youth Commission Sustainability Committee has been working with Mayor Adams to identify possible solutions towards extending the program. The Mayor is currently in conversations with PPS Superintendent Smith and TriMet General Manager Neil McFarlane to seek a solution.
- The MYC Sustainability Committee is currently gathering stories from students, families and school communities on the impact YouthPass has on their lives and the potential impact of the program ending. These stories will be made available to key decision makers as testimony where needed. Additionally, the MYC is using social media to spread the word, creating a YouthPass facebook page (<http://pdx.be/youthpass>) and Twitter account (@YouthPass) As of 11/2/2011, the facebook page has 482 followers.