

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

**RESOLUTION NO. 08-113**

Supporting a Proposal by the Multnomah Youth Commission to Establish Fareless Public Transportation for All 6th through 12th Grade Students in Multnomah County

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:**

- a) Public school transportation services in Multnomah County are limited and leave many students unserved, and lack of access to transportation is consistently cited as a key barrier to youth attendance at school, after school activities, support programs and work opportunities.
- b) Lack of access to public transportation and hence pro-social and educational activities is especially problematic in East County.
- c) 43% of Portland public school students do not graduate high school on time, as documented in a report by Connected by 25, which also emphasizes the importance of school and community based support programs to increase student success.
- d) The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that 20 – 25% of morning traffic is due to parents driving their children to school, contributing significantly to traffic congestion and carbon emissions.
- e) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that in 2006 20% of all U.S. carbon emissions from fossil fuels are produced by gasoline consumption for personal vehicle use (U.S. Greenhouse Gas Inventory). Additionally, the Union of Concerned Scientists recommends promoting mass transit and alternative transportation as a key strategy to reduce carbon emissions.
- f) The Multnomah County Board adopted “Our Bill of Rights: Children + Youth” on May 22, 2007 and resolved to “refer to the Bill of Rights as a resource and as a tool to identify and evaluate additional mechanisms to support children and youth”.
- g) “Our Bill of Rights: Children + Youth” cites transportation as a needed resource for youth educational success, and states that youth “have the right to be supported in our pursuit of a healthy lifestyle”.
- h) Multnomah County strives to be a leader in sustainability efforts that meet community needs while reducing our impact on the environment.
- i) The Multnomah Youth Commission (MYC), which is comprised of youth from across Multnomah County, serves as the official youth policy advisory body to the County Board (as per Intergovernmental Agreement #0708066).
- j) The Multnomah Youth Commission, working in collaboration with a diverse group of business, non-profit, government, education and transportation leaders, has crafted a proposal for a “YouthPass Program” to create fareless access to TriMet’s public transportation services for all 6th through 12th grade public school students in Portland and Multnomah County, with a pilot project to address this goal to be in place by September 2008.

- k) The Multnomah Youth Commission developed this proposal in consultation with TriMet personnel and presented the proposal to the TriMet Board of Directors on May 28, 2008, along with 27 letters of support from elected officials, school districts and business and non-profit leaders.
- l) Similar programs in cities across the country address multiple positive outcomes, including reducing car traffic around schools; building awareness of public transportation options among youth; reducing carbon emissions; reducing barriers to youth participation in school, enrichment opportunities and employment; and increasing school districts' flexibility for academic programming.
- m) Funding for free youth transit is available through the State of Oregon Department of Energy's Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC) program, which currently funds free public transportation for all 6th through 12th grade students in Lane County.
- n) TriMet has agreed to implement a pilot at two high schools within Portland Public Schools in September and to expand to more schools in January.

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:**

1. It is in the general interest of the County to pursue fareless access to public transportation for youth, as proposed by the Multnomah Youth Commission.
2. To explore what technical and material support Multnomah County can provide to ensure that the approved pilot moves beyond Portland Public Schools into other areas of the County, especially the school districts of Reynolds, Gresham-Barlow and Corbett which are outside of the City of Portland's boundaries.
3. To engage in quarterly meetings of key stakeholders of the YouthPass project convened through the Office of the Mayor's Youth Engagement Coordinator in order to monitor the success of the YouthPass Program and assure its successful expansion to all schools county-wide.

ADOPTED this 31st day of July 2008



BOARD OF COUNT COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

  
Ted Wheeler, Chair

REVIEWED:

AGNES SOWLE, COUNTY ATTORNEY  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By   
Stephanie Duvall, Assistant County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY:  
Ted Wheeler, Chair, Multnomah County