

PROPOSED TRANSIT PASS PROGRAM OVERVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The Greater Portland Transit District (Metro) and the Portland PSS (PSS) are proposing to implement a transit pass program for high school students.

- The Transit Pass Program would make a free transit pass available to **ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS** enrolled at Portland, Deering and Casco Bay High Schools. This includes students living within the current 2 mile transportation non-eligibility zone.
- The transit pass would allow students free and unlimited use of Metro bus routes during the academic school year, including weekends and break periods, but not including summer break.
- The program would replace the PSS’s high school student transportation operations.
- Metro and the PSS will enter into a cost-sharing agreement to jointly fund and administer the program.
- The pass program would begin with the 2015-16 academic school year.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS PROGRAM?

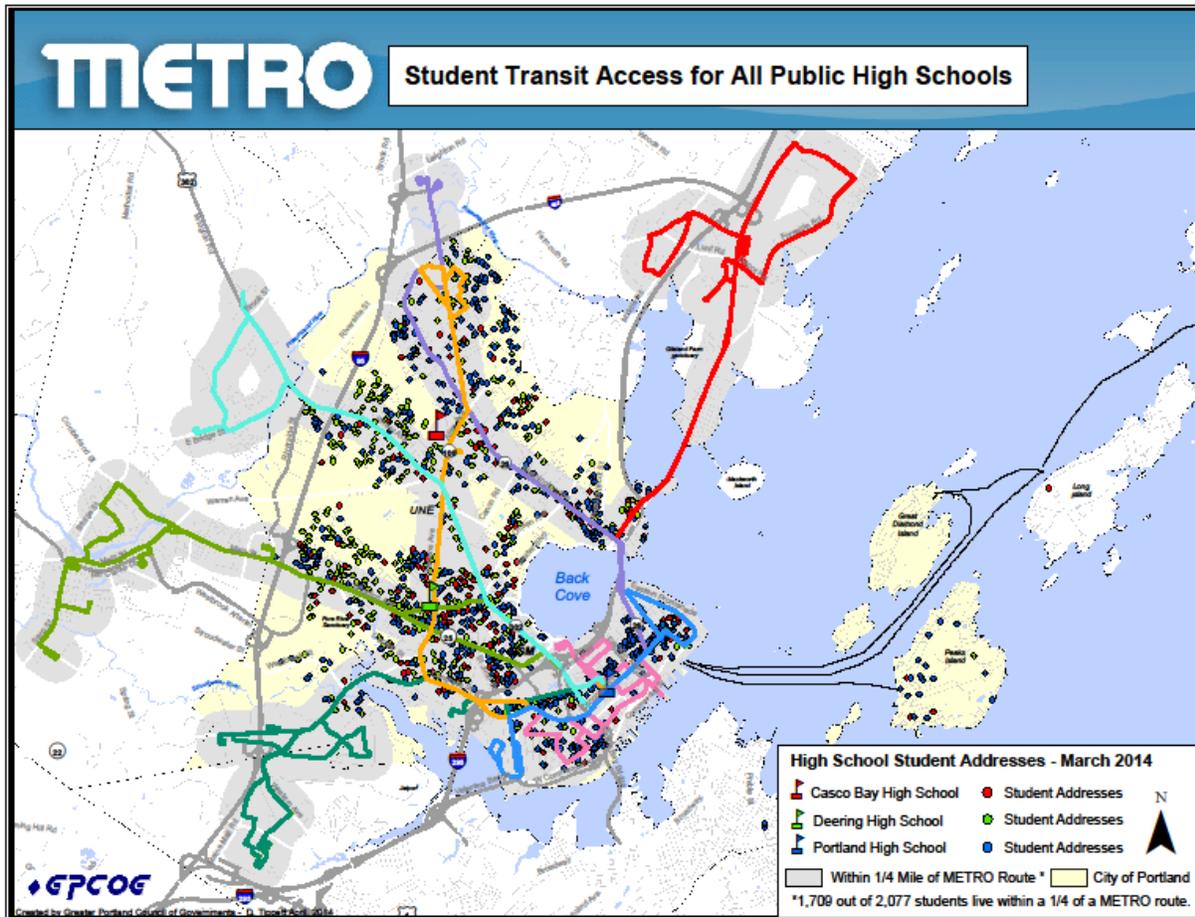
High School and youth transit pass programs are successfully in place around the country. Notable exemplars include Portland, Oregon; Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota; and Nashville, Tennessee. The program’s benefits are summarized below:

TRANSIT PASS PROGRAM BENEFITS				
STUDENTS	FAMILIES	PSS	TRANSIT SYSTEM	COMMUNITY
Provides students flexibility, convenience and fosters independence.	Provides parents greater transportation choice.	Flexibility to change bell-times and be responsive to educational and youth health needs.	Builds transit system ridership which paves the way for additional service improvements.	Reduces traffic congestion and Improves air quality
Easier to access after-school activities, jobs and community resources.	Saves time and money as parents can limit drop-off and pick-ups.	Can positively impact student attendance and retention.	Ridership gains increase the region’s federal transit funding.	Far more cost-effective use of tax-payer dollars
Real world learning by navigating city and using transit.		More fiscally sustainable model for funding transportation.	Grows next generation of transit users.	Builds community

WHAT IS METRO AND PSS DOING TO MAKE ACCESSING BUS SERVICE EASIER FOR STUDENTS?

82% of Portland's high school students live within ¼ mile (1320 feet) of a Metro bus route. Most students will have short walks to bus stops and be able to get to school using a single bus route. Metro and the PSS are committed to ensuring the vast majority of students have manageable walks to bus stops and trip times to school that are comparable to or better than current school bus trips.

Figure 2: Student Transit Access for All Public High Schools



Some students will have longer walks to bus stops and some may need to use two bus routes. **Metro and PSS staff will listen to student and parent concerns, identify areas of the city that present greater challenges for accessing transit easily and safely, and work toward reasonable solutions.**

To start, Metro is planning to implement the following improvements:

- **Route Changes** – In August 2015, Metro will convert the Route 3 (Stevens-Allen) and Route 6 (Washington) into a single bi-directional route. This change will create better cross-town transit access, minimize bus transfers for Casco Bay and Deering High School students living on or near the Washington Street, and link all three (3) high schools on a single route. While not shown on the map below, the North Deering neighborhoods will also be served by the new Route 3-6.

WHAT IS METRO AND PSS DOING TO ENSURE USING PUBLIC TRANSIT IS SAFE FOR STUDENTS?

- **Safety and Security Program** – Metro will work with the PSS and Portland Police Department to develop a safety and security program including assignment of a community resource officer (CRO). The CRO will provide a presence on Metro’s bus routes and bus stops, respond to incidents and work with Metro and PSS officials to ensure we manage safe environments.
- **Well-trained Drivers** – Metro’s buses are operated by well-trained bus drivers who take safety and customer service seriously. In connection with the development of a safety and security program, Metro will provide additional driver training specific to this program.
- **Transit Pass Program Policies & Guidelines** – Metro, the PSS and Task Force will work to develop guidelines and tips for using transit safely and effectively, program policies and a “code of conduct” that students must sign for and uphold to maintain transit pass privileges.
- **Security Cameras** – All Metro buses are equipped with four (4) point security camera systems.
- **Two-way Communication** – All Metro buses are equipped with 2-way radios ensuring constant communication with supervisors.
- **GPS Bus Tracking** – By summer 2015, All Metro buses will be tracked with GPS technology which will allow supervisors to monitor all buses constantly including real-time location, on-time performance, speed and emergency messages.
- **Bus Stop Snow Removal** – Metro recognizes the necessity of ensuring bus stops and adjacent sidewalks are safe and accessible. The City of Portland clears snow from most sidewalks adjacent to arterial streets across the city. The city also clears snow from bus stops in the downtown Portland business district. This year, Metro began the first focused effort to clear snow from high priority bus stops in Portland. This effort will be expanded during the winter of 2015-16 and resources will be allocated to make sure bus stops heavily used by students are safe and accessible.

HOW CAN STUDENTS AND PARENTS PARTICIPATE?

Metro and the School Board agreed to form a task force to address open questions, proactively address student and parents’ questions and concerns, and oversee information, marketing implementation and evaluation of the program. The task force will be comprised of representatives from the following stakeholder groups:

- School Board
- PSS Management Team
- Principals
- Parents
- Students
- City of Portland
- Metro Board
- Metro Management Team

Task Force meetings will be open to the public and will actively solicit student and parent participation.

For project updates, please go to www.gpmetrobus.com or www.portlandschools.org