

RTD PASS PROGRAM WORKING GROUP
October 24, 2017 – DRAFT Summary

Meeting Objectives:

- Review (and Repeal and Replace?) Youth/Student Approach in Option E
 - Review modeling assumptions
 - Consider challenges to conventional wisdom – what do we assume that may not be so?
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I. Opening

Mission

The Pass Program Working Group will make recommendations to RTD-Denver staff on revisions to all RTD pass programs. The working group will seek consensus recommendations to the RTD-Denver staff. The Pass Program Working Group will: Revisit and refine goals for each pass program; Refine pricing and administration of each pass program; Recommend pass program policy revisions; and Recommend criteria for RTD to use in evaluating future proposals for new pass programs

Guiding Principles

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|-----------------------|---|
| ✓ Cost-effectiveness | ✓ Meeting strategic budget plan targets |
| ✓ Equitable access | ✓ Brand loyalty |
| ✓ Convenience | ✓ Revenue certainty |
| ✓ Increased ridership | ✓ Simplifying rider-operator interactions |

II. Input from Riders/Pass Holders/Members of the Public

- DPS Parent – my high school student uses his bus pass every day
- MyDenver Card that is also a bus pass
- Youth Regional Pass is a great idea
- Low-Income program options – using 138% of federal poverty level is too low – this helps too few people
- Transit is a public service not a business
- Don't burden schools – make it easy for students to get to school
- Support the bill currently in the legislature that would allow transfer of a portion of the existing tax to fund a youth program
- Fare increases reduce ridership
- Lost service hours – R Line service cuts – reverse these changes
- Challenging to understand RTD's goals – If it is increased ridership, there would be easier way to get a pass
- 138% too low
- Location for this meeting is a barrier to public participation
- College Pass – students commute from across the region including rural areas – tuition is expensive, even at the most affordable schools – people are trying to succeed and make a better life for themselves – having affordable fares is important to that success
- Be intentional about changes that you are making
- Providing a youth fare brings in young riders and increases loyalty
- Pass books are good
- Security is intimidating
- Don't cut services
- The suburbs are going to experience an influx of population as the central city becomes too expensive – they need service
- EcoPass program is beneficial
- The region is ready for a discussion of increasing revenue to RTD for increased service
- Consider 230% of the Federal Poverty Level for the low-income threshold for families – to serve those enrolled in Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- On-time service is important because workers who are late risk being fired and students risk having points deducted from grades

- RTD needs more drivers and shouldn't be requiring that drivers who have been driving 20 years or more work 6-7 days per week
- Middle and high school students who are transit dependent and have different needs than other riders
- Young people under 12 should be free – that will reach low-income young people who won't go to Health & Human Services to get registered as low income
- Youth Pass will help families with multiple children who require their own passes
- Support 70% discount on annual pass, monthly pass, and day pass

III. Proposal to Change Option E – Regional Youth Program

- It took time to refine proposals; the existing options just weren't sufficient to meet the needs of young people and students
- Access to schools across the whole region is important
- If a youth pass exists, we are also service low-income young people too
- There is a reduced fare today, however, we don't have much information about young riders
- The MyDenver Card can't be used as a bus pass now – Denver hopes that it can be in the future
- DPS policy – providing transportation if a student's home is 3.5 miles or more from her boundary school
- Denver Public Schools orders and distributes passes but we don't have data about how they're used; MOU with RTD; RTD service is a primary mode for many high school students
- This won't be easy to do
- Easy administration is necessary
- Can you replicate this in other schools?
- All youth pass – 70% discount
- Individual schools could Buy in districts that don't do this district-wide – that keeps the current approach in E
- **The PPWG agreed to include the following in testing**
 - o **Youth Fare – 70% Off**
 - o **Youth Pass – 70% Off**
 - o **Annual, Monthly, Daily**
 - o **No Discount-on-a-Discount**
 - o **Not an All-In-Insurance Model**

IV. Low-Income Threshold

- During the discussion of modeling assumptions, the PPWG discussed expanding the options to cover move low-income people
- Laura offered that Tri-Met and Orca have, or are working toward using 200%
- Scott recommended speaking with those who would be responsible for means testing (county social service agencies and not-for-profit organizations) to assess the ease of using 200% as the threshold
- **The PPWG agreed to raise the threshold to 200% IF the consultants can make the change and not delay the testing or the November 14 meeting**

V. Modeling Assumptions

- See slide deck

VI. Next Steps

- Next meeting – November 14 – location TBD
- PPWG members should expect a doodle poll to select future meeting dates for: December 5 or 19, January 16 or 23, and February 6, 20, and/or 27
- Need volunteers to host future meetings in locations that are more centrally located and are accessible by transit