



Report by Finance and Capital Committee (B)

Board Document

OVERVIEW			
PRESENTATION NAME	U-Pass Program Modernization: Price and Eligibility Changes	DOCUMENT NO.	300097
ACTION OR INFORMATION	Action		
STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION PLAN GOAL	Service Excellence, and Financial and Organizational Efficiency		
RESOLUTION	Yes		
EXECUTIVE OWNER			
EXECUTIVE TEAM OWNER	Rickard, David B.		
D DEPARTMENT	Finance		
DOCUMENT INITIATOR	Kim, Jenny P.		
OTHER INFORMATION			
COMMITTEE	Finance and Capital Committee	COMMITTEE DATE	02/26/2026
PURPOSE/KEY HIGHLIGHTS	The U-Pass expansion and regional growth strategy advances our Strategic Transformation Plan goals of service excellence and financial and organizational efficiency. Staff will present and recommend approval of a new pricing model to expand eligibility to additional categories of students and introduce an opt-in option.		
DISCUSSION	U•Pass is currently a group-discounted transit pass, offering unlimited rides to full-time students at accredited colleges and universities during the academic year. The program is designed to offer discounted travel on Metrobus and Metrorail at \$1.00 a day while increasing access to the region. Today, U•Pass provides value to universities, students, and communities. Today’s program serves over 35,000 students and provided 4.6 million trips in FY2025. From inception, program eligibility has been limited to full-time students and has required mandatory enrollment;		



Board Document

part-time students have been categorically excluded. Staff proposes a new program structure to expand participation to new universities. Going forward, student eligibility will be defined by each participating university and an additional program option will be available to universities intended to modernize the program and grow participation.

The proposed models are highlighted below, outlining a tiered pricing structure and selective program enrollment as outlined in the attached presentation:

- **Universal Model:** Retains the base \$1.00 a day pricing model for 100% student participation. Pricing will be indexed to align with future Board approved fare increases.
- **New Opt-In Model:** The new option allows universities to choose an opt-in/opt-out program structure for \$1.75 a day, with a program enrollment minimum of 33 percent of the university's total student population.

Under the new program structure, universities can choose enrollment options suitable for each campus with differentiated pricing. This approach reduces enrollment barriers and extends the program to part-time students and community colleges to cover a broad range of academic curriculums. The new program would also tie future respective daily rates to Board-approved general fare increases for the succeeding academic year; to keep pace with inflation and preserve full fare ridership revenue.

If adopted, the new program would be implemented starting August 2026, during the Fall semester, to allow time for student engagement and outreach. The current U•Pass contract would also be amended to reflect new eligibility, pricing, and program criteria. As part of the implementation, Metro will engage with jurisdictional transit providers on revenue sharing agreements to promote seamless regional travel and transfer reciprocity.

Expanding the U•Pass program promotes seamless regional travel by allowing college students access to jobs, internships, community and discounted travel. With over 200,000 students located in frequent bus and rail service corridors, Metro expects to benefit from ridership growth as the program matures. Universities benefit by offering alternatives to campus parking and ridesharing. Joining the expanded U•Pass program will save universities money and improve transportation services by reducing the need for campus parking. Expanding the U•Pass program to more colleges and universities will



Board Document

	advance Metro's commitment to making public transportation convenient, accessible, and affordable across the region.
INTERESTED PARTIES	Colleges and universities in the Washington Metropolitan region; jurisdictional partner bus agencies.
RECOMMENDATION/NEXT STEPS	Adoption of the University Pass (U•Pass) Program expansion and regional growth strategy.
FUNDING IMPACT	As proposed, the program would support ridership growth. At this time, no topline budget impact is anticipated.

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF REVISED UNIVERSITY PASS PROGRAM FARES AND RULES

RESOLUTION
OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, Section 60 of the WMATA Compact requires approval from the Board of Directors to establish new fares and fees; and

WHEREAS, In Resolution 2016-14, the Board of Directors established a University Pass (U•Pass) pilot program and authorized staff to enter into a pilot agreement with interested universities; and

WHEREAS, In Resolutions 2016-24, 2017-16, and 2018-15 the Board of Directors expanded the U•Pass program and made it permanent; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Directors desires to update and revise the delegated authority given to the General Manager and Chief Executive Officer in Resolution 2018-15 to expand the U•Pass program and obtain sponsorships for the program;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it

RESOLVED, That Resolutions 2016-14, 2016-24, 2017-16, and 2018-15 are rescinded in their entirety; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors authorizes the General Manager and Chief Executive Officer or his designee to establish and manage the Universal U•Pass Program and Opt In U•Pass Program consistent with the respective terms and conditions set forth in Attachment A hereto; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the General Manager and Chief Executive Officer and Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, or their designees, are authorized to negotiate and execute agreements with universities for participation in the U•Pass Programs consistent with this Resolution, but may not make structural changes to the U•Pass Programs without prior approval of the Board of Directors; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Resolution shall not affect contracts currently in force through the duration of the 2025-2026 school year; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That in order to ensure the continuity of the U•Pass Programs, this Resolution shall be effective immediately.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,

/s/

Patricia Y. Lee
Executive Vice President, Chief Legal Officer,
and General Counsel

WMATA File Structure No.:
9.12.9 Tariff (WMATA Fare Structure)

PROPOSED

ATTACHMENT A

	Universal U•Pass Program	Opt In U•Pass Program
Minimum Participation Requirement of Eligible Students	100%	33%
Minimum cost to participating university per enrolled student per day	\$1.00	\$1.75

Under both the Universal U•Pass Program and the Opt In U•Pass Program each participating university shall define a population of enrolled students eligible to participate, with the consent of the WMATA Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer or his designee.

When applicable, the daily cost to each participating university shall increase by no less than the percentage increase of the weekday base fare on Metrorail following a fare increase, rounded up to the nearest five (5) cents, unless explicitly waived by the WMATA Board of Directors.

Passes may be issued for durations as may be established and revised by the WMATA Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer or his designee. Passes shall be valid for use on any trip on Metrorail and Metrobus but may not be used on MetroAccess.

Participating students shall pay the non-rider rate at parking facilities.