

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

☒ Action ☐ Information

MEAD Number:
201977

Resolution:
☒ Yes ☐ No

TITLE:

University Pass (U•Pass) Pilot Program

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

To update the Board of Directors on the U•Pass pilot program and seek approval for a permanent U•Pass Program for colleges and universities in the region.

PURPOSE:

Staff seeks Board authorization to establish a permanent U•Pass Program for colleges and universities in the region.

DESCRIPTION:

Key Highlights:

- Following Board authorization for the U•Pass Pilot Program, Metro successfully enrolled more than 10,000 American University undergraduates, graduates and law school students in the U•Pass program in August 2016.
- The Pilot Program with American University has generated over 2.2 million rides on Metrobus and Metrorail since inception; with ridership in the Tenleytown corridor increasing by 10 percent over pre-U•Pass (2015) levels.
- Over 60 percent of U•Pass ridership has occurred during non-peak periods when WMATA has excess service capacity.
- In 2018, WMATA enrolled 10 new schools to the pilot program; bringing the total number of colleges enrolled to 11.
- The U•Pass program has generated over two million trips and \$5.4 million in cumulative revenue since August 2016. The program has recognized \$2.4 million from participating schools for year to date FY2018 through March.

Background and History:

U•Pass is a group-discounted fare medium offering unlimited riding privileges to full-time students at accredited post-secondary institutions during the academic year.

The "university pass" concept is used at more than 20 transit agencies across the nation, partnering with more than 200 colleges and universities. WMATA's goal is to increase ridership by enrolling as many of the 225,000 students from the more than 20 colleges in the region.

On March 24, 2016, the Board of Directors authorized a pilot University Pass program as part of the FY2017 budget. This was a joint ridership and customer service initiative targeting all local colleges in the Washington metropolitan region. On August 17, 2016, American University became the first institution to launch the U•Pass Pilot Program with more than 10,000 undergraduate, graduate and Washington College of Law students.

On March 23, 2017, the Board extended the pilot program for one year; enabling Metro to add students attending Washington, DC satellite programs from Boston University, Calvin College, Carnegie Mellon University, Heinz College, Hope College, Lutheran College, Maxwell School of Syracuse University, The Ohio State University, Wake Forest University, University of Colorado Boulder and the University of Wisconsin. These universities joined the program in early 2018.

Discussion:

The U•Pass program has generated over two million trips and \$5.4 million in cumulative revenue since August 2016. The program has recognized \$2.4 million from participating schools for year to date FY2018 through March. The pass is currently priced at \$1.00 a day for full-time students during the academic semester.

Metro staff have promoted the U•Pass on campuses to educate students about the Metro system and encourage ridership. Before summer break, when the U•Pass is inactive, Metro promoted other fare media to students to encourage their continued ridership. To kick off the 2017-2018 school year, a scavenger hunt was held with American University students, who were required to ride Metrorail and Metrobus to complete the activities.

Program trends indicate that 64 percent of all rides are taken on Metrorail, and 36 percent on Metrobus. However, over 60 percent of total U•Pass ridership occurs during off-peak periods when capacity on Metrobus and Metrorail is generally available, making the marginal cost of the program insignificant.

As the pilot has matured, Metro has received more interest from students and school administrators in the region. Metro staff conducted a "lunch and learn" forum attended by more than 50 student representatives from local universities to spark interest in the program, and met with the consortium of graduate schools, which resulted in the increased enrollment. Current prospects include Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), University of Maryland, George Mason University, Catholic University and Gallaudet University. Collectively, these schools represent an estimated population of 160,000 students.

As a result of the successful pilot and growing interest in the program, staff proposes to make the program permanent to help drive ridership and to build the next generation of riders. Key program elements including price, structure and modes will remain the same. Students participating in the program will pay the non-rider rate for parking. Future changes to the program may include regional partner participation.

FUNDING IMPACT:

No funding impact - The U•Pass program has generated over two million trips and \$5.4 million

in cumulative revenue since August 2016. The program has recognized \$2.4 million from participating schools for year to date FY2018 through March.

Project Manager:	Tracey Foster
Project Department/Office:	CFO/TRES

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	March 2016 – Authorization of the University Pass Pilot August 2016 – First University enrolled in program March 2017 – Authorization of the University Pass Pilot Program extension. January 2018 – 10 additional Universities/Colleges enrolled in program.
Anticipated actions after permanent implementation	Fall 2018 - Enroll new schools for the 2018-2019 school year. FY2019 – Expand to include regional partner participation

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff seeks Board authorization to establish a permanent U•Pass Program for colleges and universities in the region.

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF THE UNIVERSITY PASS PROGRAM FARES AND RULES

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

WHEREAS, Section 60 of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Compact requires Board of Directors approval to establish new fares and fees; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Directors established a University Pass (U·Pass) pilot program and authorized staff to enter into a pilot agreement with interested universities in Resolution 2016-14, and expanded the pilot program through Fiscal Year 2018 in Resolutions 2016-24 and 2017-16; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Directors desires to make the U·Pass Program permanent, and delegate authority to the General Manager/Chief Executive Officer (GM/CEO) to expand the U·Pass Program and obtain sponsorships for the program; NOW, THEREFORE, be it

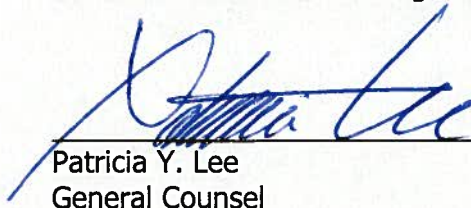
RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors establishes a permanent U·Pass Program on the following terms and conditions: all enrolled students must participate in the U·Pass Program; the cost to the participating university will be \$1.00 per enrolled student per day; passes may be issued for durations as may be established and revised by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO); passes may be used on Metrorail and Metrobus, including express services and airport shuttles, but not MetroAccess; participating students will pay the non-rider rate for parking; and part-time students, MetroAccess-eligible students and full-time university staff are excluded; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the GM/CEO is authorized to negotiate and enter into revenue sharing programs with jurisdictional transit providers or regional partners in order to include those providers in the U·Pass Program; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the CFO may negotiate and execute corporate sponsorship agreements that leverage the U·Pass Program and its brand; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That in order to ensure continuity of the U·Pass Program, this Resolution shall be effective July 1, 2018.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,



Patricia Y. Lee
General Counsel