

# U-Pass Program Modernization: Price and Eligibility Changes



**Presentation to the Finance & Capital Committee**

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

February 26, 2026

# Delivering Your Metro, the Way Forward

Focus Today



## Service Excellence

Deliver safe, reliable, convenient, accessible, and world-class service that customers can trust across all modes.

### Objectives of Service Excellence Goal

- **Safety and Security**
- **Reliability**
- **Convenience**



## Talented Teams

Attract, develop, and retain world-class talent where individuals feel valued, supported, and proud of their contribution.

### Objectives of Talented Teams Goal

- **Recruitment and Retention**
- **Learning and Development**
- **Customer Service Mindset**

Focus Today



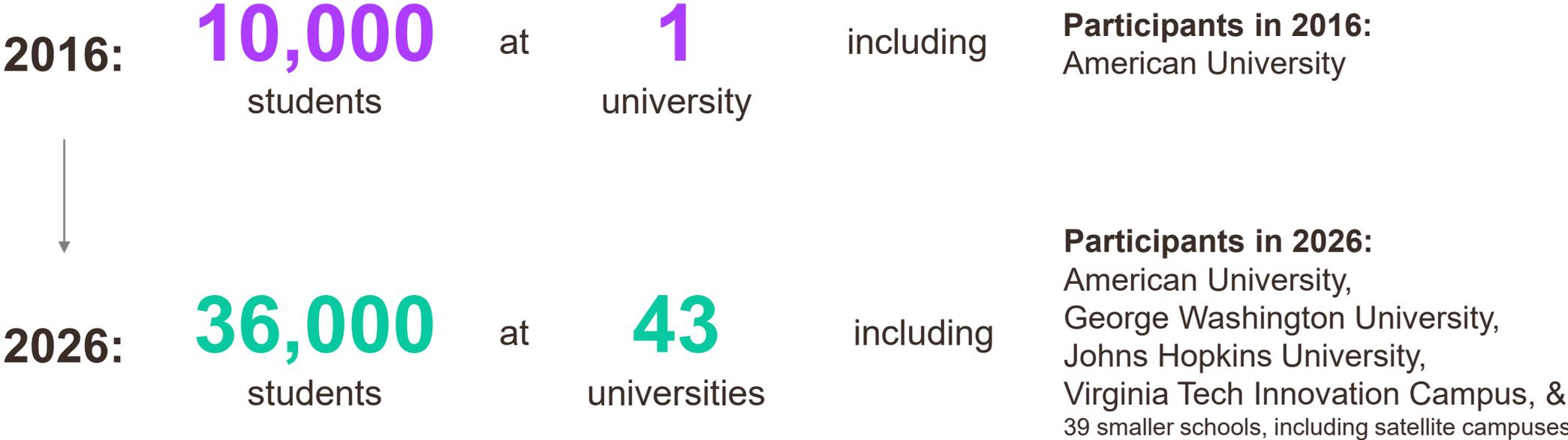
## Financial & Organizational Efficiency

Steward public resources and efficiently allocate resources where they drive the most value, to ensure service delivery.

### Objectives of Financial & Organizational Efficiency Goal

- **Financial Responsibility**
- **Organizational Efficiency**
- **Energy Management**

# This year, U-Pass is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary



# Today, U-Pass provides a significant discount and unlimited rides for participating students

Today's Daily Cost  
for Participants:

**\$1.00**

per student per day



**43**  
colleges and universities



**36,000**  
participating students

VS

Equivalent Daily Cost  
for Non-Participants:

**\$7.20**

per student per day\*



**20+**  
nonparticipant institutions



**165,000+**  
nonparticipant students\*\*

\* Comparable cost is for Metro's \$216 Monthly Unlimited Pass.  
\*\* Based on Metro's estimate of potentially-eligible part-time and full-time students at campuses located near Metro transit facilities. The Washington region has 300,000 total post-secondary students, per a Consortium of Universities estimate.



# To expand U-Pass further, some universities have identified a need for additional program flexibility



## Program Goals

Grow student ridership to inspire lasting transit-use among next generation of transit customers.

- **Increase affordable transit access:** Expand the number of students participating in the U-Pass program
- **Build a regional travel product:** Enable easy expansion of U-Pass into a broader regional university travel product
- **Balance growth with financial stewardship:** Index to future fare increases through program design



## Opportunities for Growth

To join the program, universities not yet participating in U-Pass have identified a need for additional program flexibility with an opt-in model.

- **Flexibility:** Some students need the flexibility to decide whether to participate
- **Frequent transit access:** Some schools have less access to frequent transit service

By providing this additional flexibility, Metro expects to enroll additional universities and students located nearby to Metro transit service.

# Recommendation: Update the U-Pass program to provide two options. Each school can choose the **current universal model** or **new opt-in model**

Metro will provide a two-track program, allowing each school to choose between the current universal model or a new opt-in model with a lower minimum participation requirement:



**Universal Model:** \$1.00/student/day & 100% participation requirement\*



**Opt-In Model:** \$1.75/student/day & 33% participation requirement\*

## Program Conditions:



Schools can allow part-time students, graduate students, and community college students to participate



Each school will determine the population of students eligible to participate in the U-Pass program



Metro will increase daily cost with future fare increases

\* Based on the actual number of students eligible to participate in U-Pass each school year.



# Next Steps

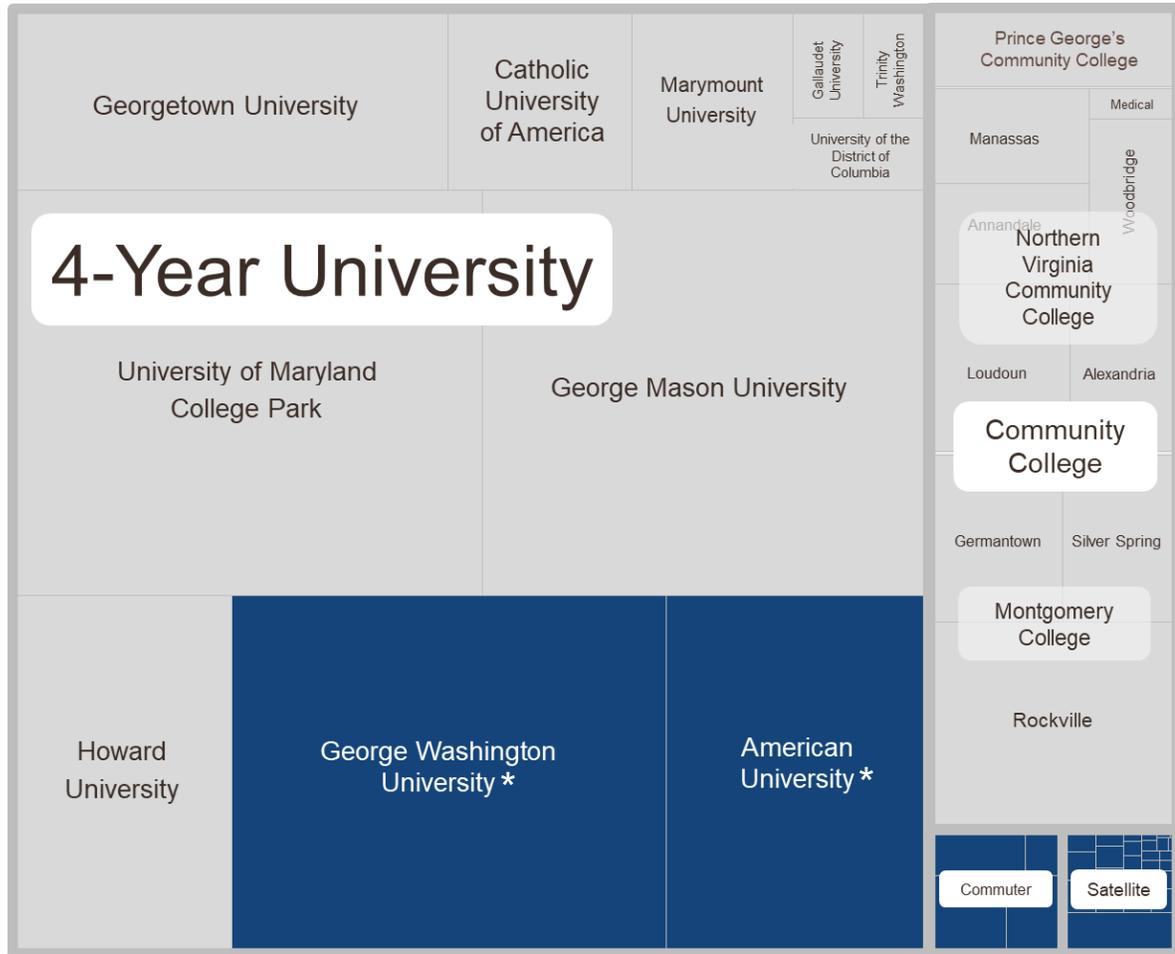
- **Staff recommends Board adoption of the proposed resolution**
- Continued outreach to universities not yet participating in the U-Pass program
- Launch new program for the 2026-2027 school year

# Appendix

# U-Pass Participants (2025 – 2026)

1. American University
2. Arizona State University
3. Bay Atlantic University
4. Baylor University
5. Boston University
6. Brown University
7. Carnegie Mellon University - Heinz College
8. Carnegie Mellon University - Institute for Strategy & Technology
9. College of The Holy Cross - Washington Semester Program
10. College of William and Mary - Washington Center
11. Divine Mercy University
12. Georgia Institute of Technology
13. Hamilton College
14. James Madison University - Washington Semester
15. Johns Hopkins University - Advanced Academic Programs
16. Johns Hopkins University - School of Advanced International Studies
17. Johns Hopkins University - Carey School of Business
18. Loyola University
19. Lutheran College - Washington Semester
20. Marquette University - Les Aspin Center for Government
21. Northwestern University
22. Ohio University - Scripps College of Communication
23. Southern University of New York (SUNY) - Brockport
24. Stanford University
25. Syracuse University - Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs
26. The Chicago School of Professional Psychology
27. The George Washington University
28. The Ohio State University - John Glenn College of Public Affairs
29. United Methodist College Washington Consortium Capitol Hill (CHIP)
30. University of Alabama - School of Social Work
31. University of California - Washington Program (UCDC)
32. University of Colorado
33. University of Georgia Washington Semester
34. University of Kentucky
35. University of Pennsylvania
36. University of Southern California - DC
37. University of Texas - Dallas - The Archer Center
38. University of Wisconsin
39. Virginia Tech (Innovation Campus)
40. Wake Forest University
41. Washington Internship Institute

# Current pricing structure has limited U-Pass to 18% of total addressable market



U-Pass offered, by number of full-time students attending

\*\* Based on Metro's estimate of potentially-eligible part-time and full-time students at campuses located near Metro transit facilities.

18%

of the 200,000 post-secondary students in the DMV are enrolled in U-Pass.\*\*

0%

of the 60,000 part-time post-secondary students in the DMV are eligible to participate in the U-Pass program, including 9,000 at institutions that offer U-Pass.\*\*

# U-Pass is most widely adopted by universities with access to frequent and convenient transit options

U-Pass

- Offers U-Pass
- Does not offer U-Pass

Number of Students

- 0
- 10000
- 20000
- 30000
- 40000

