Alameda County Transportation Commission Affordable Student Transit Pass Program
Alameda County Technical Advisory Committee

Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates
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ALAMEDA County Transportation Commission

Affordable Student Transit Pass Program

- Identified in the 2014 Transportation Expenditure Plan and funded by Measure BB

  - *$15 million to implement "successful models aimed at increasing the use of transit among junior high and high school students, including a transit pass program for students in Alameda County."*

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Affordable Student Transit Pass Program

- Currently developing pilot programs for middle and high school students in four subareas to begin in 2016-2017 school year
  - *Three-year pilot period, with annual evaluations and adjustments to implementation*
  - *Program to make transit affordable or prioritize crossing guards*
  - *First step toward a universal affordable transit pass program for students in Alameda County*

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Overarching Goals and Commission Direction

Overarching goals for the project that inform the decision-making process

- Reduce barriers to transportation access to and from schools
- Improve transportation options for Alameda County's middle and high school students
- Build support for transit in Alameda County
- Develop effective three-year pilot programs

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Overarching Goals and Commission Direction

- At least one pilot program will be an universal free transit pass, to be implemented in a planning subarea that demonstrates the most financial need

- Address student crossing guard needs

- Transit operators are serving as partners only for duration of pilot program period (three years)

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State of the Practice: Lessons Learned

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State of the Practice

- Peer cities and programs:
    - *S-Pass Program in Baltimore, MD*
    - *Go-To Pass in Minneapolis, MN*
    - *Student MetroCard in New York, NY*
    - *YouthPass Program in Portland, OR*
    - *School Transit Subsidy Program in Washington, D.C.*

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Baltimore, Maryland: S-Pass Program

Registrants	34,000
Schools	Public Middle and High
Annual Cost	$5.2 Million
Pass Type	Magnetic Stripe Card
Allowed Use	M-F 5 AM to 8 PM

- Must be under 21 and live at least 1.5 miles from their school.
- State requires schools to provide free transit passes to middle and high school students. Schools administer the program.

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Minneapolis, Minnesota: Go-To Pass

Registrants	5,500
Schools	Public High Schools
Annual Cost	$1.9 Million
Pass Type	Smart Card
Allowed Use	5 AM to 10 PM

- Unlimited rides on bus and light rail to high schools in the Minneapolis Public Schools system.
- Each high school has a Check & Connect staff member
- Eligibility for free pass: live outside the school walk zone or qualify for free/reduced lunch.

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New York, New York : Student MetroCard

Registrants	544,000
Schools	Public K-12
Annual Cost	$135 Million
Pass Type	Magnetic Stripe Card
Allowed Use	M-F 5:30 AM and 8:30 PM

- Free or half-priced travel between home and school on New York City buses and subways for up to 3 trips/day
- Grades K-12: 17 different types of student travel passes on the basis of **grade level** and **distance** from school

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Portland, Oregon: YouthPass Program

Registrants	13,000
Schools	Public High
Annual Cost	$3 Million
Pass Type	Flash Pass – ID Card Sticker
Allowed Use	No Restrictions

- Managed by TriMet; schools distribute student ID cards.
- Initially funded by a State of Oregon Business Energy Tax Credit. When tax credit ended in 2011, the school district, City of Portland, and TriMet agreed to split the cost.

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Washington, D.C.: School Transit Subsidy Program

Registrants	16,000
Schools	Public, Charter, Private; all grades (ages 5 – 21)
Annual Cost	$18.6 Million
Pass Type	Electronic Municipal Student ID
Allowed Use	No Restrictions/5:30 AM-9 AM & 2 PM-8 PM

- Provides free or reduced price rides for students at Washington, DC schools who ride Metrobus, the DC Circulator or Metrorail to and from school or participating in school-related activities.

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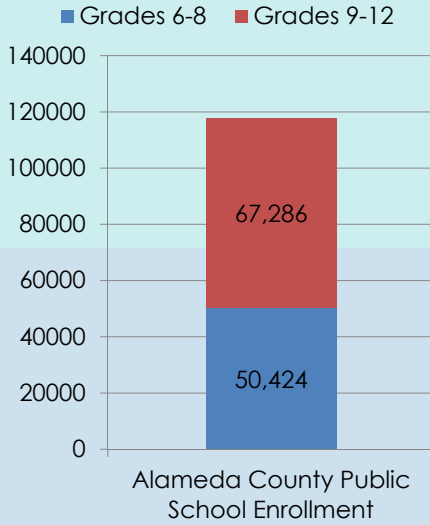
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State of the Practice – Lessons Learned

- Involve schools, students, parents in program development
- Transit pass should be integrated with other benefits/student ID card
- Need program coordinators at each school
- Transit agency should plan for increased usage
- Need to clearly define program goals

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Existing Conditions

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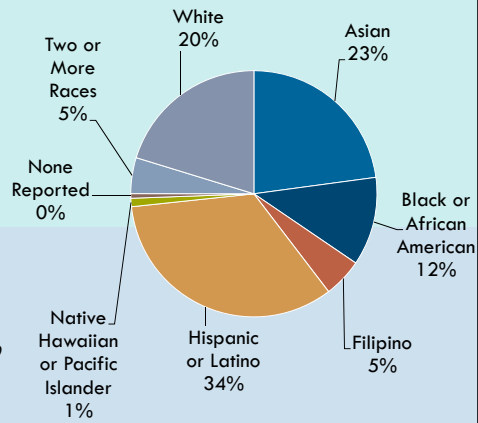
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Alameda County Academic Profile

- 18 school districts
- 16 districts have 170 public middle and high schools
  - *78 public middle schools*
  - *76 public high schools*
  - *16 combined public middle/high schools*
  - *Total of 117,710 students*
- 2014-2015: 224,966 students in Alameda County

Grades 6-8 ■ Grades 9-12

67,286

50,424

Alameda County Public School Enrollment

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Alameda County Academic Profile

Assessed school districts and schools based on multiple characteristics, including:

- *Enrollment, broken down by race/ethnicity*
- *Percentage eligible for free/reduced-price meals (FRPM)*
- *Proximity to transit (1/2 mile to a stop)*
- *School bus programs (provided at the district level)*

White 20% / Asian 23% / Two or More Races 5% / None Reported 0% / Black or African American 12% / Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander 1% / Hispanic or Latino 34% / Filipino 5%

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Alameda County Transit Profile

- 5 primary transit agencies
  - *AC Transit*
  - *BART*
  - *LAVTA/Wheels*
  - *Union City Transit*
  - *Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA)**

- Assessed along various characteristics including:
  - *Route alignment, especially school-trippers*
  - *Ridership*
  - *Fare structure and policy*
  - *Student and/or youth-oriented programming*
  - *Proximity to schools*

*WETA is not considered part of the Affordable STPP pilots due to limited service area in Alameda County

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Existing Conditions - Key Takeaways

- Transit service is available to most students; transit routes serve nearly all Alameda County middle and high schools
  - *99% of middle schools are within ½ mile of a transit stop*
  - *100% of high schools and combined middle/high schools are within ½ mile of a transit stop*

- Cost, travel time, family convenience, and safety (real or perceived) may be influential in guiding transportation choices

- Transit systems use different technologies, offer different fare types, and have varying levels of access to data about youth transit ridership

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Existing Conditions - Key Takeaways

- Diversity in student needs, school programs, and transit services: one Affordable STPP model may not suffice
  - *Different transit agencies have different approaches to providing service near schools*
    - School "tripper" service, even within one transit agency, varies by geographic area
  - *Potential demand in schools varies widely across the county*
    - Only 1% of Piedmont's and 8% of Pleasanton's students are eligible for FRPM
    - More than 2/3 of the students in the Emeryville, Oakland and San Lorenzo school districts are eligible for FRPM
- A school's capacity and ability to administer an on-site Affordable STPP cannot be assessed based on quantitative factors alone

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Recommended Site Selection and Program Evaluation Frameworks

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Pilot Program Development

Phase I - Site Selection
- Define Site Selection Framework (March 2016 Commission Approval)
- Assess Potential Sites for Model Program (April 2016)
- Recommend Model Program Sites (May 2016 Commission Approval)

Phase II – Program Design For Model Program Sites (June-August 2016)
- Based on Selected Model Program Sites, Develop Program Parameters
- Tailor Program Characteristics for Each Model Program Site
- Finalize Design for Each Model Program Site

Phase III – Pilot Program Implementation at Model Program Sites (Fall 2016)
- Implement Program at Minimum of Four Model Program Sites

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Site Selection/Program Considerations

- At least one model program site in each Alameda County planning subarea

- Seeking matched pairs of characteristics for evaluation

- Not proposing an application process for pilots – could be for countywide program after the pilot period

- Assuming in-school administrative responsibilities

- Seeking to use Clipper but also consider implementation of other types of tickets, including flash pass or integrating school ID

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Site Selection Framework

Six steps to assess school characteristics, transit availability, and readiness of the school to administer the program:

1. Identify paired schools within each subarea

2. Tally enrollment to understand registration implications

3. Verify/update demographic data (in progress)

4. Conduct initial sort
   - *Bus Stop within 1/4 mile*
   - *School Pair*
   - *"Traditional" School Day*
   - *Income Levels/Leverage Opportunity*

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Site Selection Framework

5. Sort for deployment-readiness characteristics and factors
   - *2+ routes serving bus stop(s) within 1/4 mile of school, frequency of service at these stops*
   - *Transportation identified as issue by district LCAP*
   - *High minority vs. low minority*
   - *High ethnic diversity vs. low ethnic diversity*
   - *Safe Routes to Schools participant*

6. Conduct school site screen for highest ranked model program sites
   - *Administration support*
   - *Community support*
   - *Student groups*
   - *Available resources (e.g., crossing guards, staffing, etc.)*

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Model Program Evaluation Framework

We are using both quantitative and qualitative measures to evaluate performance (18 total)

Quantitative performance measures:

1. *Student perception of transit options and barriers*
2. *Transportation costs to families (participant cost)*
3. *Participant or student attendance*
4. *Pass availability and use*
5. *Afterschool activity participation*

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Model Program Evaluation Framework

Other quantitative performance measures:

6. *Student ridership (including non-passholders)*
7. *Inclusion of students, parents, community members, administrators*
8. *Diverse participant reach*
9. *Program cost per participant*
10. *Administrative costs as a proportion of total program costs*

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Model Program Framework Evaluation

Qualitative performance measures:

11. *Effectiveness of marketing and outreach*

12. *Linkages with existing fare payment option(s)*

13. *Leverage with other school-based transportation programs*

14. *Leverage with other funding and administration programs*

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Model Program Framework Evaluation

Other qualitative performance measures:

15. *Transit operator response(s)*

16. *Ease of participation*

17. *Ease of administration (county-wide, site-level, operator-level)*

18. *Cost performance against expectations*

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Stakeholder Input from February 18 Workshop

- Understanding student proximity to transit stops is important, although data is not readily available due to confidentiality requirements

- Frequency of transit service should be considered in selection process

- Need to understand how student enrollment is distributed among the different schools

- Ensure enough funding for administration at school sites

- Ensure maximum use of these funds for direct student passes

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Next Steps

- April 2016: Stakeholder feedback on model program parameters

- May 2016: Recommendation of model program parameters to the Commission

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Moving Forward

- Fall 2016: Pilot program implementation begins
- Summer 2017: Year One evaluation
- Summer 2018: Year Two evaluation
- Summer 2019: Year Three evaluation, and final recommendations

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Recommendation

- Approval of the Affordable Student Transit Pass Program Site Selection and Model Program Evaluation Frameworks

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Thank you!

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