



CityBus Unlimited Pass Program & Youth Pilot Program

June 8, 2021

October 2020 Council Study Session

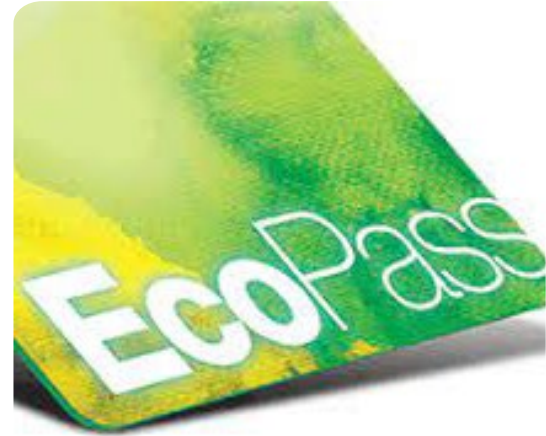
Fare Policy Options discussion:

- Restoration of fares—*Implemented Feb. 2021*
- Clipper START Discount Program for Low-income Riders—*Implemented Nov. 2021*
- **Expansion of Unlimited Access Pass Programs**
 - EcoPass Program (institutions, employers, residential developments)
 - Youth (TK-12) Unlimited Access Pilot Program



What is an Unlimited Pass Program?

- Discounted bulk rate for an entire population of participants to have FREE access to a transit system
- Benefits:
 - Improving transportation equity
 - Increasing transit ridership
 - Improving school attendance
 - Reducing vehicular trips and parking demand
 - Supporting densification and affordability initiatives
 - Expediting bus boarding
 - Increasing transit's profile within the community



**Veterans
ride free on
CityBus!**



Why Unlimited Pass, why now?

- Pandemic recovery:
 - Economic support for Santa Rosa community
 - Promote transit as safe & reliable City service
- Ridership demographics
 - 86% of CityBus riders are low-income
 - 53% do not have access to a working vehicle
 - 28% are K-12 or college students
- Grant funding available to support program
- Aligns with Council and region's goals of affordability and sustainability



“This program has multiple ‘bottom lines,’ including helping to combat climate change. It’s rare to find a public program that has a ripple effect like this one.”

Sacramento Councilmember
Jay Schenirer

Examples of Unlimited Pass Programs

- Widely utilized in the university setting throughout CA and the county
- Supports transit for youth, employees, non-profits and residents of both affordable and market-rate housing developments
- Program models:
 - Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's SmartPass
 - Denver Area Regional Transportation District's EcoPass
 - Sacramento Regional Transit District's RydeFreeRT program for TK-12 grade youth

SRJC STUDENTS RIDE FREE ON ALL MAJOR TRANSIT LINES!

ANY LINE, ANY TIME



Just flash your validated CubCard photo ID and ride FREE on Sonoma County Transit, Santa Rosa CityBus and Petaluma Transit!

Five reasons to take the bus:

1. Economics: It's Free for Students
2. Environment: Reduce Your Carbon Footprint
3. Celebration: Avoid the parking situation
4. Personal Health: Get more exercise than car riders
5. Public Health: Connect with your community

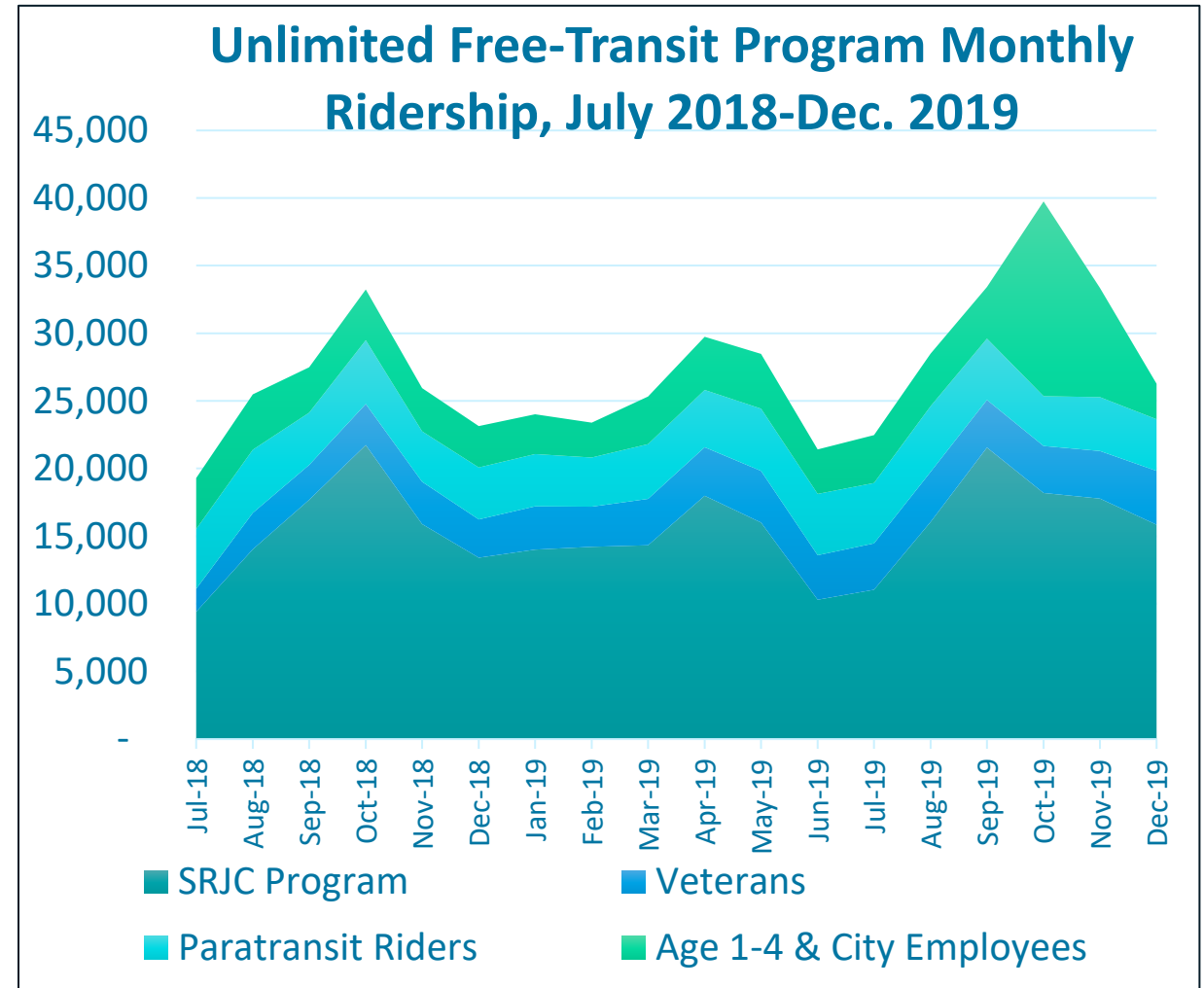
  



Current unlimited free-transit programs

- Current free-fare program performance:
 - 17% of total ridership in 2019
 - 30,000 riders monthly
 - Growth rate exceeding that of the system as a whole
- SR Junior College
 - 15,000 riders/month prior to pandemic
- Paratransit Registrants
 - 4,200 free trips per month during FY19
- Veterans
 - 3,000 free trips per month during FY19
- City employees and children 4 and under
 - 3,400 riders per month in FY 2019



Unlimited Pass Program Benefits for Santa Rosa

Supports housing development

Reduction in Greenhouse gas

Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

Affordable transportation for residents, students, and employees

Supports the City's efforts and planning initiatives:

- Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program
- Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program (SB 1128)
- Downtown Station Area Specific Plan
- SB 743 Implementation
- Climate Action Plans



Proposed Unlimited Pass Program Design

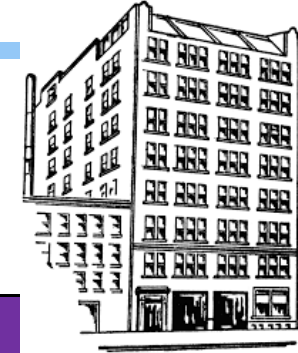
- Partnerships with employers, housing developers, institutions, non-profits with 50 or more participants
- Maximum Year 1 cost ceiling based on:
 - 4% of participants assumed to ride each weekday
 - One-time administrative charge of \$3,000
- Annual cost based on number of rides multiplied by \$0.75 - \$0.85/ride (CityBus average fare)
- Track ridership manually and using electronic media
 - In the future, use Clipper Card
 - Entity and City will be responsible for pass distribution and managing fraud
- Enter into financial agreements with each entity



Partner Entity Profiles



Employee Population	1000
4% - likely Transit Riders	40
# of riders/year/likely rider (10/week *52 weeks)	520
Expected # of rides	20,800
Cost per ride	\$ 0.80
Estimated Year 1 Cost ceiling	\$ 16,640
Annual Cost/person for entire population	\$ 17
One-time administrative charge	\$ 3,000
Comparison cost: 31-day pass for year	\$ 600,000



Residential Units	100
Average house hold size/housing mix	2.58
Population eligible	258
4% - likely Transit Riders	10
# of riders/year/likely rider (10/week *52 weeks)	520
Expected # of rides	5366
Cost per ride	\$ 0.80
Estimated Year 1 Cost ceiling	\$ 4,293
Annual Cost/Residential Unit	\$ 43
One-time administrative charge	\$ 3,000
Comparison cost: 31-day pass for year	\$ 154,800

Proposed Youth (TK-12th Grade) Unlimited Pass Pilot Program

- For 12th grade and under
 - Including youth not associated with school system
- Unique benefits
 - Reduced household expenses for families
 - Improved school attendance
- Outreach will continue to promote and evaluate the program
 - 7 school districts
 - Sonoma County Office and Education
 - Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) and other youth organizations
 - Private high schools
- TK- 8th grade – no ID needed
- 9th -12th grade – Use school ID or CityBus issued pass



Transportation Fund for Clean Air (TFCA) Funding

- Bay Area Air Quality Management District program funded by a \$4 surcharge per car or truck funding projects that reduce on-road motor vehicle emissions
- Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) awards annual formula allocation to Santa Rosa CityBus for projects that improve local air quality
 - Funds restricted to a narrow range of uses and subject to annual review of cost effectiveness in reducing GHGs
- \$250,000 in TFCA funds available in existing grants to support Unlimited Pass Program and TK-12th grade unlimited pass pilot program



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

Program Funding and Seeding

An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood with a hot air balloon in the sky. The image shows a mix of green lawns, trees, and houses, with a hot air balloon floating in the blue sky in the upper right corner. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

- No impact on the General Fund
- Unlimited Pass Program to use TFCA funds to seed partnerships with employers, housing developers, institutions, non-profits;
 - 1st year up to a 50% match
 - 2nd year up to a 25% match
 - 3rd year up to a 10% match
- TK-12th grade unlimited pass pilot to be funded by TFCA for 18-months
- Potential new revenue from partnering entities
- Over time program will be fine tuned to be self-sustaining and expand transit revenues

Program Kick-off, Implementation, and Evaluation

Kick-off proposed for July 1st, 2021

Implementation

- **TK – 12th grade unlimited pass pilot program:**
 - Develop promotional campaign
 - Continue outreach to school districts & youth organizations
- **Unlimited Pass Program:**
 - Establish agreement template
 - Develop promotional campaign and develop as City tool in menu of transportation mitigation strategies
- **Track ridership for each program initiated**
- **Conduct billing for grant funds and partner entities**

Evaluation and Program Development

- **Evaluate benefits and cost-effectiveness**
- **Conduct surveys of program participants**
- **Identify long-term funding for TK-12th grade program**
- **With success, expand the programs beyond Santa Rosa**

Recommendation

It is recommended by the Transportation and Public Works Department that the Council, by resolution,

- 1) establish the CityBus Unlimited Pass Program allowing the Transit Division to seek additional community partnerships to provide fare-free transit access,
- 2) adopt a methodology for calculating Unlimited Pass Program costs for participating entities,
- 3) delegate authority for executing Unlimited Pass Program partnership agreements up to \$100,000 to the City Manager or designee, and
- 4) authorize the Transit Division to initiate an 18-month grant-funded unlimited pass pilot program for TK-12th grade youth.

QUESTIONS?