

MEMORANDUM

February 26, 2019

TO: Transportation and Environment (T&E) Committee
FROM: ^{GO} Glenn Orlin, Deputy Director
SUBJECT: Kids Ride Free and Youth Cruiser Pass Programs
PURPOSE: Panel discussion

A panel of students will be presenting the Committee with its observations and concerns about the Kids Ride Free and Youth Cruiser Pass programs in Montgomery County.¹ Four Youth Commissioners from the Commission on Children and Youth have conducted a county-wide student survey to assess student awareness about and use of public transit options, with an emphasis on the Youth Cruiser Smart Trip Ride On and the Kids Ride Free Program. Their goal is to identify knowledge deficits, barriers to use, and areas of the county in which transit options are not adequately serving students. The Youth Commissioners presenting are:

Itamar Fiorino, Blair HS
Victoria Koretsky, Richard Montgomery HS
Talia Nesin, Blair HS
Ashley Thommana, Blair HS

Also anticipated to attend are:

Brian Kramer, Northwood HS, Founder, Association for Advancement of Maryland Schools
Michael Solomon, Springbrook HS, Co-Founder of Montgomery County Students for Change
Ananya Tadikonda, Richard Montgomery HS, Student Member, Board of Education
Zoe Tishaev, Clarksburg HS, MCCPTA Student Representative

Staff from the Department of Transportation (DOT) will be on hand to respond to questions and comments.

¹ Key words: #KidsRideFree, plus search terms transit, Youth Cruiser Pass.

Kids Ride Free. Young people who are 18 years and younger who are Montgomery County residents may ride any Ride On bus and most Metrobus routes² within the county without paying a fare between 2:00 until 8:00 pm weekdays. The student must show the bus operator either a Youth Cruiser SmarTrip card or a valid school ID. When the program was established in FY07 the “free” hours were 2:00-7:00 pm weekdays; they were extended to 8:00 pm weekdays starting in FY15.

DOT has shared the information as to the cost of expanding the hours of Kids Ride Free, noting that there are two cost elements to the program: the loss of revenue to Ride On, and the payment to WMATA for their foregone Metrobus revenue. The following table shows the current annual cost and the annual cost for four options to expand the free hours:

Free Fare Period	Lost Ride On Revenue	Payment to WMATA for Foregone Revenue	Total Net Cost	Added Net Cost ³
2pm-8pm weekdays (current)	\$838,315	\$550,000	\$1,388,315	N/A
2pm-11pm weekdays	\$1,005,977	\$660,041	\$1,666,018	\$277,703
6am-8pm weekdays	\$1,156,975	\$760,000	\$1,916,975	\$528,660
6am-8pm every day	\$1,268,093	\$832,933	\$2,101,026	\$712,711
All bus service hours	\$1,448,002	\$951,083	\$2,399,085	\$1,010,770

Youth Cruiser Pass. This pass is available to County residents 18 or under (older, if still enrolled in high school) to use on Ride On during all service hours. This pass, which costs \$11/month, is *not* accepted on Metrobus. A Summer Youth Cruiser Pass costing \$18 covers the three-month period of June through August. The Youth and Summer Youth Cruiser Passes have been sold more than two decades.

Youth and Summer Youth Cruiser Passes are sold at: the TRiPS Commuter Store In Silver Spring; the Mobile Commuter Store; the County Division of Treasury at 255 Rockville Pike; all Montgomery County Libraries; and select Montgomery County Schools which have agreed to partner with DOT in this initiative. Once a rider has a Youth Cruiser SmarTrip, passes and stored value can be loaded onto Youth Cruiser SmarTrip® cards either in person or online at SmarTrip.com, after creating an account online. Through their online account, customers have the option of automatically purchasing Youth monthly passes for their Youth Cruiser SmarTrip® Card, which is then added to a purchaser’s card seven days before the end of every month.

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² Metrobus Routes C2, C4, C8, D5, F4, J1, J2, J3, J4, K6, K9, L8, Q2, Q4, Q6, T2, Y2, Y7, Y8, Z2, Z6, Z7, Z8, and Z11.

³ Compared to the current hours for Kids Ride Free.