



# Free Student Bus Pass Program

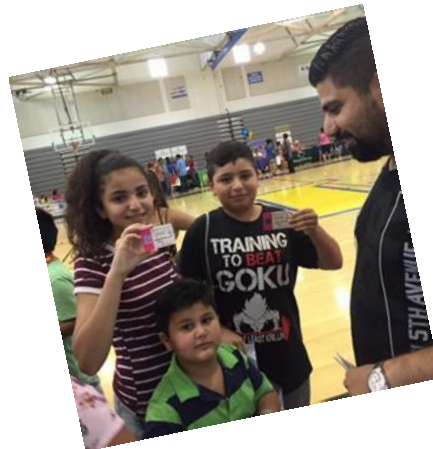
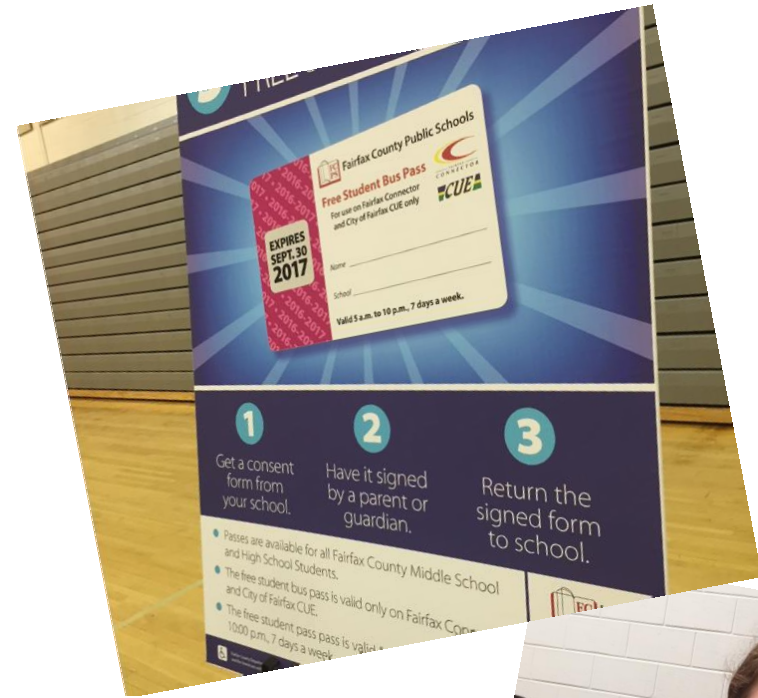
Update on Success, Recommendations for SmarTrip® & Metrobus Pilots

Kala Leggett Quintana and Michael Felschow  
Fairfax Department of Transportation

May 8, 2018

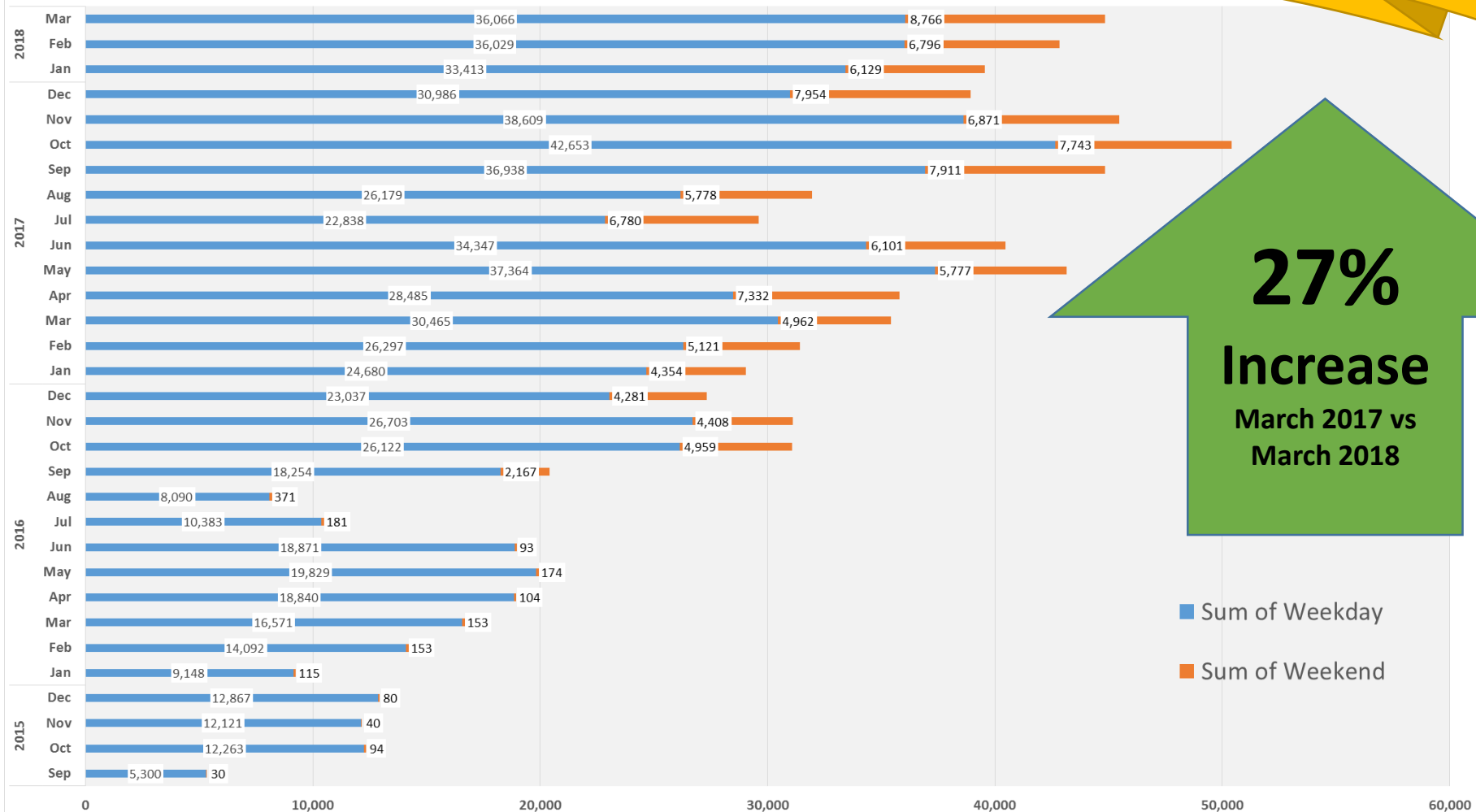
# Success

- In less than three years, Fairfax Connector has provided more than 800,000 trips to students
- Students are now 7% of total Fairfax Connector ridership



# Ridership Tells the Story

Fairfax Connector Monthly Student Ridership



**Over 800K Student Trips**

**27% Increase**  
March 2017 vs March 2018

**Average Daily Trips**  
Weekday: 1,600  
Weekend: 1,000

■ Sum of Weekday  
■ Sum of Weekend

# Benefits Now and into the Future

- Students use Fairfax Connector to access:
  - School and extracurricular activities
  - After school support and tutoring
  - After school jobs and internships
  - Libraries, museums and other recreational activities
- The Free Student Bus Pass is helping prepare the future workforce and familiarizing them with public transportation
  - More comfortable choosing transit when they enter the workforce
  - Critical to reducing congestion and improving mobility around the region



# Suggested Program Improvements SY2018-19

## 1. Convert to the SmarTrip® card platform

- Replace existing Free Student Bus Pass flash card across all participating middle and high schools



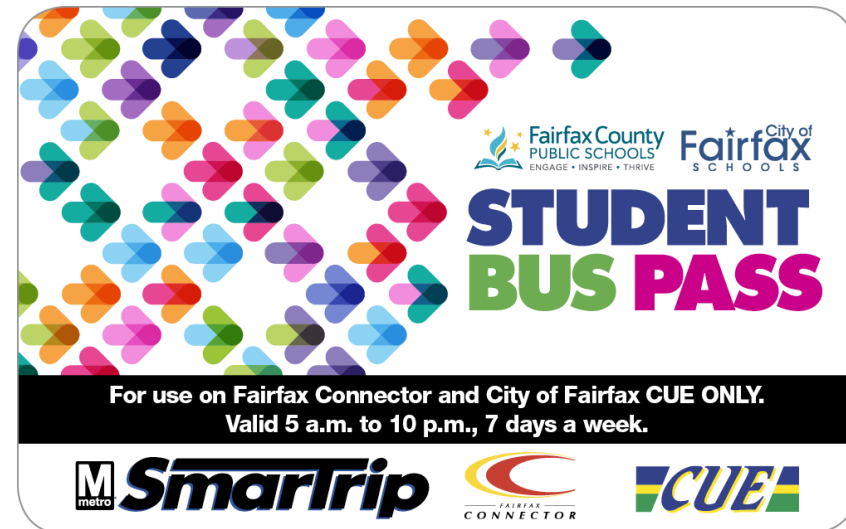
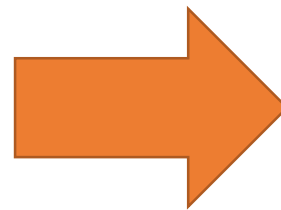
## 2. Implement Metrobus pilot for J.E.B. Stuart (Justice) High School

- Allow students to ride Metrobus in Northern Virginia for free with the same accessibility afforded to students eligible for Fairfax Connector Free Student Bus Pass



# Recommendation #1: Conversion to SmarTrip Card (SY2018-2019)

- Transition from existing flash pass to SmarTrip®
- If approved, all Fairfax County middle and high schools will have a custom branded SmarTrip® card to replace the existing flash pass for free rides on Fairfax Connector and City of Fairfax CUE



# SmarTrip at School – Key Advantages

- School representatives to register all SmarTrip cards at WMATA.com
- FCPS staff will be able to view the cards in use at any time
- FCPS administration can disable cards at any time and replace cards easily
  - If lost or stolen
  - To avoid misuse
- School administration can monitor use for abuse or inappropriate use during school hours

**Metrorail 3 month Travel Summary** LOG OUT

4/26/2016 - 7/24/2016

Your On-Time Score: 88%

Number of trips made: 32 (avg. 3 trips/week)

Total miles traveled on Metro: 127

[Manage Your Card](#)

- ▶ [View Card Summary](#)
- ▶ [Daily Service Report Archives](#)
- ▶ [Export to Excel](#)
- ▶ [FAQs](#)

**On-time performance by trip**

Information is displayed for trips that you've made 5 or more times during the past 3 months

Where you travel	When you travel	On-time Score*	# Trips	Fastest time	Average time	Slowest time <a href="#">(more info)</a>	WMATA expected travel time range
Columbia Heights to Gallery Place-Chinatown		91%	11	9 (5/6/16)	13	18 (5/17/16)	
	Mid day	100%	2	13 (5/23/16)	14	14 (5/24/16)	7 - 20 min
	AM Peak	89%	9	9 (5/6/16)	12	18 (5/17/16)	7 - 16 min
Gallery Place-Chinatown to Columbia Heights		90%	10	10 (6/23/16)	13	17 (7/18/16)	
	PM Peak	90%	10	10 (6/23/16)	13	17 (7/18/16)	7 - 16 min

# Recommendation #2: Metrobus Pilot for schools not served by Fairfax Connector

- In 2016, at a joint meeting of the Board of Supervisors and the School Board, members asked FCDOT to consider a pilot to offer Metrobus access to J.E.B. Stuart High School students and other schools not served by Fairfax Connector
- Four Fairfax County High Schools are served only by Metrobus
- Limited participation in the Fairfax Connector Free Bus Pass program, due to lack of Fairfax Connector service in their area

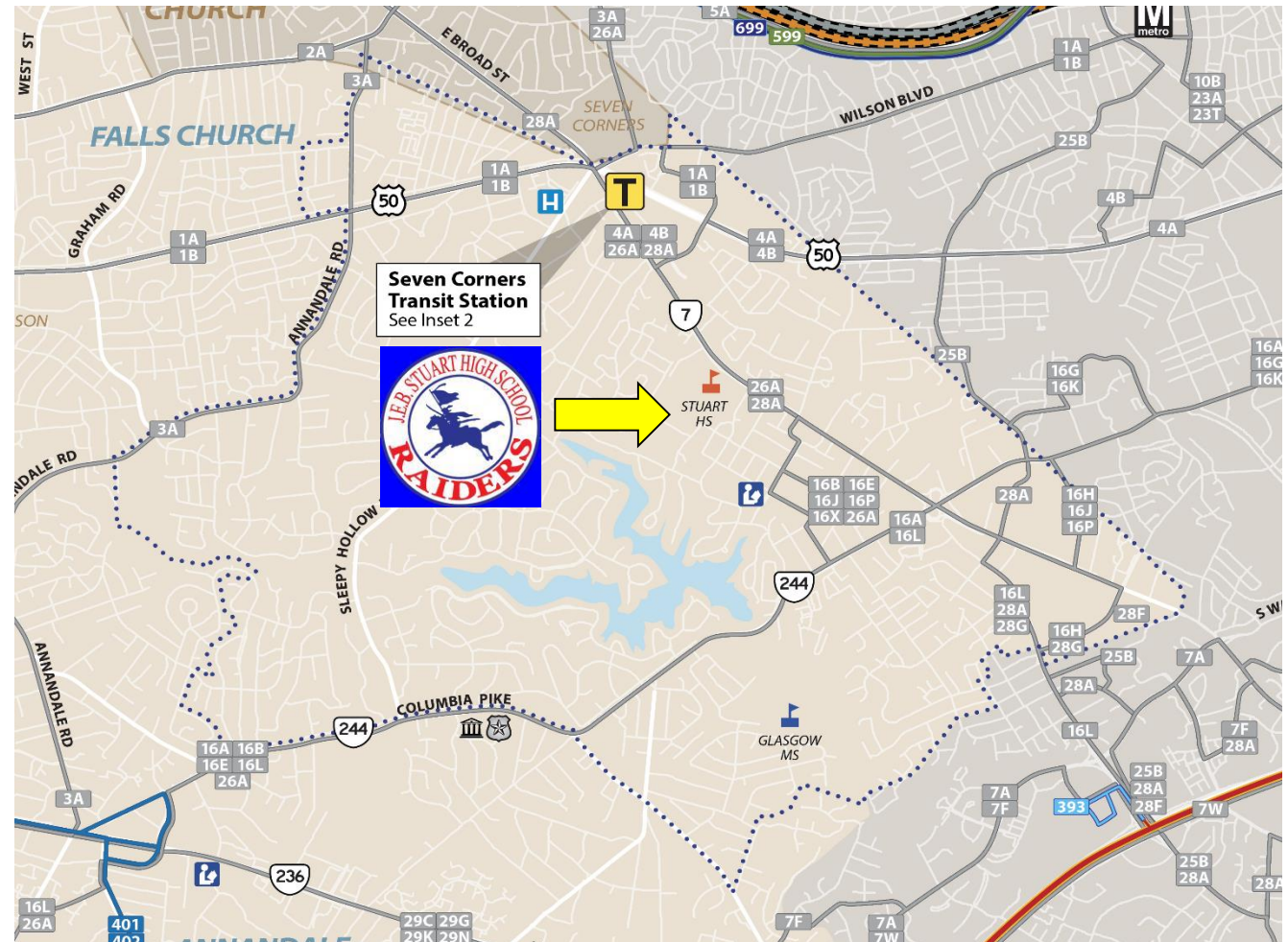


Annandale HS



# Proposal

- Begin with J.E.B. Stuart (Justice) High School to gauge the efficacy and use of a Metrobus accessible student pass
- Cited by members of the Board of Supervisors and the School Board as an appropriate school to use for pilot, based on student population needs
- Most isolated from Fairfax Connector access
- Only transit accessible via Metrobus



# JEB Stuart (Justice) HS Perspective



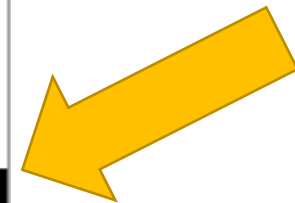
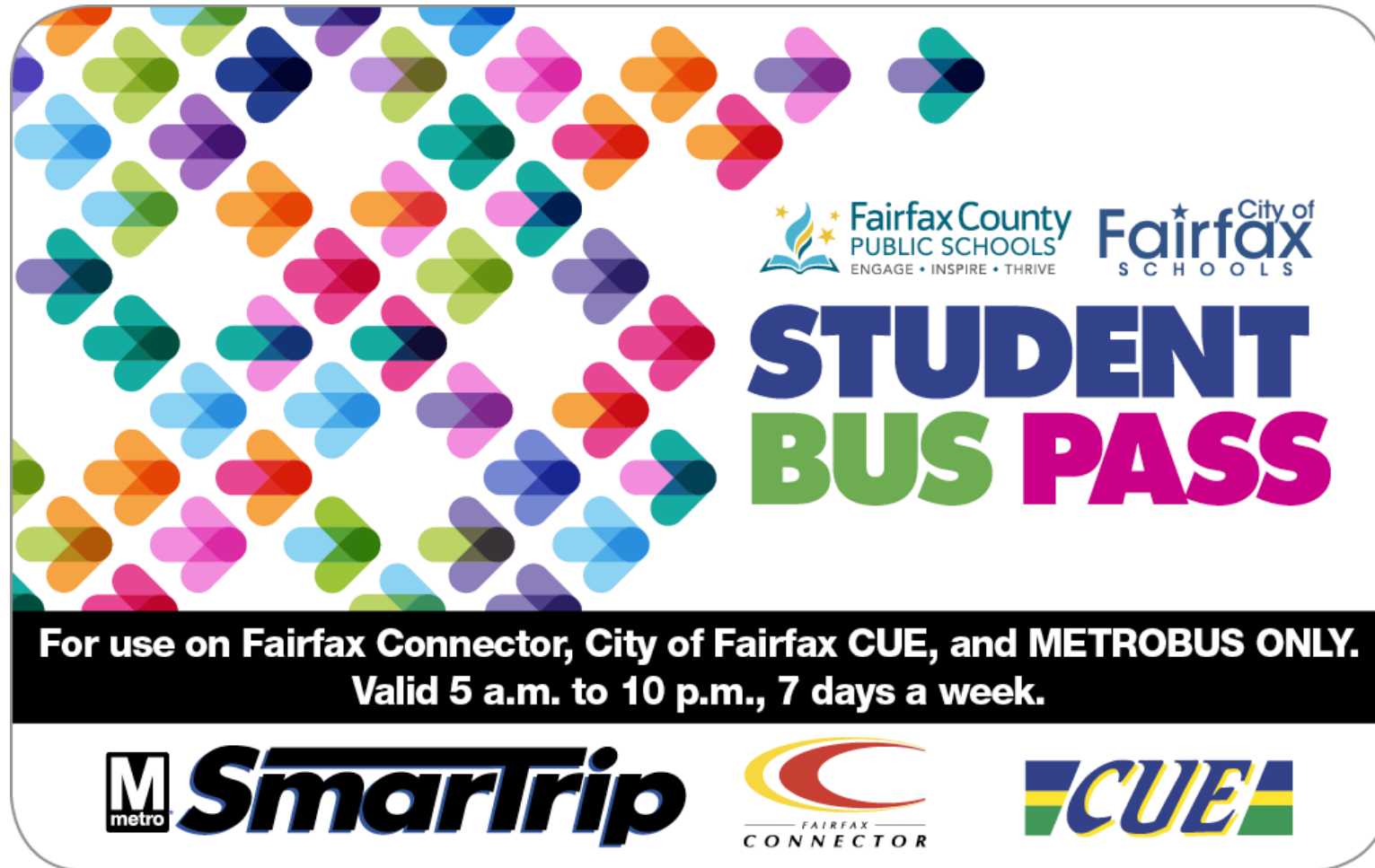
- Stuart Principal Penny Gros is supportive
- Students face a variety of challenges due to “transportation insecurity”
  - Students who miss the school bus do not have alternative transportation
  - Parents often work multiple jobs and cannot transport their children to school or activities
- Could help improve school attendance
  - Approximately 25% of our Stuart HS students are considered chronically absent, because they miss more than 10% of the school days (18 out of 180)
  - A target of this program would be to reduce absenteeism by providing another method of transportation for students who do not have a ride to school if they miss the school bus
  - In SY 18-19 Stuart HS attendance will be monitored through new Virginia Department of Education Standards of Accreditation
  - School could lose accreditation, if attendance goals are not met
- Students unable to take advantage of internship opportunities, due to lack of transportation
- Agreed to quarterly progress review; provide reports as needed; and report back on program progress and impacts in May 2019
- If pilot is approved, County must pay for all Metrobus trips taken

# Why SmarTrip®?

- Metrobus requires the use of cash or SmarTrip® to board their buses
- Metro will not accept our existing flash pass, because there's no way to accurately account for the trip when a student boards
- SmarTrip® cards can be uniquely programmed for specific purposes
- Can create our own unique custom design



# SmarTrip Card Student Pass Design (Metrobus Pilot Version)

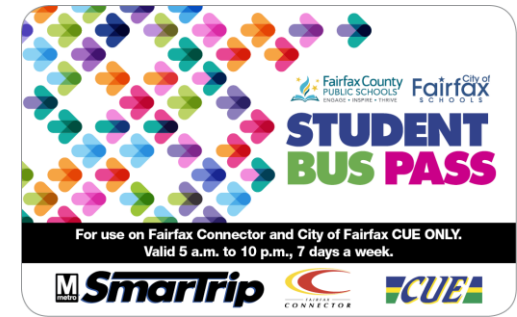


# How A Customized SmarTrip Card Works



WMATA Creates Two New Rider Classes:  
Rider Class #1 and Rider Class #2

# Rider Class #1 (RC1)



- Programmed to access Fairfax Connector and City of Fairfax CUE only
- The RC1 SmarTrip® card is tapped on farecard machine; records a “FREE ride” on Fairfax Connector and City of Fairfax CUE
- No cash value maintained on cards
- Students not allowed to add cash value to cards
- Unique card design with Fairfax Connector, City of Fairfax CUE, FCPS and SmarTrip logos on card
- Participating middle and high schools to receive SmarTrip® cards with Rider Class 1 preloaded
- Replaces existing “non-electronic” pass
- Can not be used on Metrobus or Metrorail

# Advantages

- Improved student bus pass security
- SmarTrip<sup>®</sup> cards are:
  - Reusable
  - One-time permission from the parent or guardian
  - Eliminates need to re-issue annually
  - Reduces administrative burden on schools
- Gives the FCPS administration and parents greater control
  - Monitor use and disable cards that are misused, abused, lost, or stolen
- Programmed to expire on student's graduation date
- More accurate count of student ridership
- Flags the student rider class to operator to determine eligibility

# Rider Class #2 (RC2)

- Programmed to access Fairfax Connector, City of Fairfax CUE and Northern Virginia Metrobus routes
- J.E.B. Stuart (Justice) High School to receive SmarTrip® cards with Rider Class 2 preloaded
- Metrobus access limited to Northern Virginia routes ONLY
  - Option to exclude routes that terminate in DC or Maryland, or solely within DC or MD
- Cards branded differently than the Rider Class 1 FFX Connector/City of FFX CUE only SmarTrip® cards
- Unique card design with Fairfax Connector, City of Fairfax CUE, FCPS, SmarTrip® and Metrobus logos on the card
- Students not allowed to add cash value to card
- Can not be used on Metrorail



Northern VA Metrobus Route #'s	Service Area
1A, 1B, 1C	Wilson Blvd to Vienna Line; Fair Oaks Fairfax Blvd Line
2A, 2B	Washington Blvd. -- Dunn Loring Line; Fair Oaks -- Jermantown Rd Line
3A, 3T	Annandale Road Line; Pimmit Hills Line
4A, 4B	Pershing Dr. – Arlington Blvd. Line
7A, 7F,	Lincolnia – North Fairlington Line
7C, 7P, 7M, 7W	Park Center – Pentagon Line; Mark Center- Pentagon Line; Lincolnia – Pentagon Line
8S, 8W, 8Z	Foxchase -- Seminary Valley Line
10A, 10B, 10E, 10N	Alexandria – Pentagon Line; Hunting Point – Ballston Line
15K	Chain Bridge Road Line
16A, 16B, 16E, 16G, 16H, 16J, 16K, 16L, 16P	Columbia Pike Line; Columbia Heights West – Pentagon City Line; Annandale –Skyline City-Pentagon
17B, 17G, 17H, 17K, 17L, 17M	Kings Park – North Springfield Line;
18G, 18H, 18J, 18P	Orange Hunt Line; Burke Centre Line
21A, 21D	Landmark -- Bren Mar Park -- Pentagon Line
22A, 22B, 22C, 22F	Barcroft – South Fairlington Line
23A, 23B, 23T	McLean Crystal City Line
25B	Landmark – Ballston Line
26A	Annandale – East Falls Church Line
28A, 28F, 28G	Leesburg Pike Line; Skyline City Line
29C, 29G, 29K, 29N, 29W	Annandale Line; Alexandria – Fairfax Line; Braeburn Drive – Pentagon Express Line
REX	Richmond Highway Express
S80, S81	TAGS Springfield Circulator: Franconia Springfield Metro, Springfield Town Center, MetroPark/INOVA Healthplex

Routes in **RED** serve schools directly

# Production Costs

- Annual cost for existing Free Student Bus Pass flash pass and security stickers (12,000 passes in SY17-18): **\$4,500 (not reusable)**
- The production cost per SmarTrip® card varies on the quantity purchased (based on the existing contractor for WMATA)
- 12,000 SmarTrip® cards : **\$23,160 (reusable)**

## SmarTrip Card Quantities/Cost

FROM	TO	COST PER CARD
6000	9,999	\$2.20
10,000	49,999	\$1.93
50,000	99,999	\$1.71
100,000	*	\$1.69

# Suggested SmarTrip® Purchase Quantities for Pilot

SmarTrip® Card Type	Quantity	Cost per Card	Total
Rider Class 1	12,000	\$1.93	\$23,160
Rider Class 2	6,000 (min. qty. req.)	\$2.20	\$13,200
		<b>TOTAL EST. COSTS</b>	<b>\$36,360</b>

\*Unlike the existing flash pass that must be exchanged annually, SmarTrip® cards can be assigned to a student for multiple years and reassigned



# What's Different?

- Requires FCPS Administrative Staff to register cards on-line for students into WMATA SmarTrip<sup>®</sup> registration system
- Cost of program increases at front end due to SmarTrip<sup>®</sup> card costs
- Requires tighter controls for Administration on the Metrobus enabled cards
- Cards have an unlimited cash value
  - Consider a cap to monthly value to limit abuse potential (if needed)
- Strong reporting/audit system within the school is required to ensure cards are not abused



# What's Different?

- No direct control over the WMATA operators or their training to assist students
  - WMATA operators have experience with DC and MD students
- Requires a new multi-year permission form and release from FCPS
- Requires separate permission forms for middle and high school students
  - When students transition from 8<sup>th</sup> grade to 9<sup>th</sup> grade, they need to re-register their cards with new school or obtain new pass from new school
  - Applies when a student changes schools within the county



# What's Different?

- Requires FCDOT staff to create supplemental outreach materials, guidelines and training materials for FCPS
- New procedures
  - FCPS staff will need to be trained on card registration, securing cards, card replacement, generating simple reports, and maintaining spreadsheets

# Fiscal Impacts of Stuart (Justice) HS Metrobus Pilot

- County must pay for student trips on Metrobus
- Assuming a similar monthly usage rate of ride 10 times a month, on average (120 trips a year at \$2.00 a trip – assuming no lower negotiated rate with WMATA) = **\$240 per student, annual cost**
- Estimated number of student passes assigned to 1,080 students (50% of student population\*) = **\$260K annually**
- Propose funding through cost savings in the Fairfax Connector budget.  
**Total cost estimates for SmarTrip card expansion and one year Metrobus pilot not to exceed \$300K**

*\* Based on our experience with South Lakes HS and Edison HS*

# Follow Up

- If approved, staff to use the Metrobus pilot to track costs and usage and report back to the Board of Supervisors Board Transportation Committee on the findings in May 2019
- Determine feasibility to expand the program in future years to three additional High Schools with Metrobus access only
  - Annandale
  - Falls Church
  - Marshall





It's never too  
early to  
identify our  
future  
customers!



Questions?