

**IMPACT STATEMENT**

**Legislation title:** \*Authorize an Intergovernmental Agreement with Portland Public Schools and TriMet for \$966,666 to continue the Student Transit Pass Project to offer public transportation for high-school students at Portland Public Schools (Ordinance)

**Contact name:** Alissa Mahar

**Contact phone:** 503-823-6188

**Presenter name:** Alissa Mahar

**Purpose of proposed legislation and background information:**

The goal of the Student Transit Pass program is to lower barriers to youth involvement in school, out-of-school activities, and employment, while also reducing our carbon footprint, cutting traffic, and building a new generation of transit users. The Student Transit Pass program provides a free transit pass to PPS students for use during the school year.

**Financial and budgetary impacts:**

General fund dollars have been allocated in PBOT's 2016-2017 Adopted Budget. There is no new financial impact.

**Community impacts and community involvement:**

This program provides a free transit pass to PPS students for the school year.

**Budgetary Impact Worksheet****Does this action change appropriations?**

☐ **YES:** Please complete the information below.

☒ **NO:** Skip this section

Fund	Fund Center	Commitment Item	Functional Area	Funded Program	Grant	Sponsored Program	Amount

KK 7-20-16

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Steve Novick Commissioner Leah Treat Director

## TriMet Youth Pass Basics

**Funding:** The city now contributes about one-third of the cost, or about \$960,000 per year. The school district and TriMet pay the rest. Total annual cost = \$3,000,000

**Why is there a Youth Pass for Portland Public High Schools:** Unlike most other districts, Portland Public Schools does not provide yellow bus service to high school students, although they do for K-8. The district relies, instead, on Portland's extensive public transit system.

**Who benefits:** All 10 Portland Public High School students, which is approximately 13,000 high school students.

**Current Campaign at OPAL:** Expand the Youth Pass service area east.

YouthPass is a program that provides free transit access for Portland Public Schools students during the school year only. 60% of PPS students reported that they rely on TriMet to get to school. Without YouthPass, many students would not be able to afford to go to school. Currently, there is no guarantee for YouthPass to be funded by the City. Students that attend schools in East Portland also do not have access to this important program and lifeline. Youth Environmental Justice Alliance (YEJA) members know that YouthPass supports students' education, gives them the opportunity to access academic and extracurricular activities and to contribute to their communities. We demand YouthPass to be permanently funded and expanded to communities in East Portland.

With large numbers of low-income people, immigrant families and communities of color in East Portland, students demand equity. YouthPass leads to improved school attendance and access to extracurricular activities, jobs, health and cultural services. Every student should have equal access to this lifeline and opportunity, regardless of race, class, or where they live.

### Campaign Goals:

- YouthPass permanently funded by the City
- Launch YouthPass program at David Douglas and Parkrose High Schools
- Improve transit service and frequency around schools

### **Why Youth Transit Access?**

- Oregon has the nation's second-worst graduation rate (68%). Having effective and affordable transportation decreases barriers for students to go to school and learn.
- Introducing public transit to youth encourages and develops future ridership, which addresses traffic congestion and climate change.



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- Students and families are increasingly faced with high cost of living and displacement. YouthPass is critical in supporting these families who are already struggling.

YEJA and our allies demand equal access to YouthPass, and a committed investment in student success. This effort seeks to influence TriMet, City of Portland, Metro Regional Government, Multnomah County, and local school districts to come together to address this inequity.

### **History: The Youth Pass Campaign in Portland Started in 1997**

16 Years ago in 2000, Sisters in Action for Power, a group of young women in Portland, Oregon working to win free bus service for students to and from high school, are having their voices heard. The Sisters in Action for Power three-year campaign for free student bus service is the force behind Portland's Tri-Met transit company's recent decision to allow free rides to high schoolers who qualify for free or reduced school lunches. The group, whose campaign has been covered in numerous Portland newspapers, is showing how acting on one issue can create positive social change for a large group of people. The Sisters' hard work is paying off in a big way for low-income high school students. But even though they have achieved some success, the Sisters aren't stopping there - they plan to keep battling for the option of free service for all Portland high school students.

So just how did the Sisters become so focused? Well, let's go back in time to the early 1990s. At that time the state legislature allowed the Portland and Eugene school districts to get rid of "yellow bus" service to high school students. As a result, "yellow bus" service in Portland is only available to students who live within 1.5 miles from campus. Then, in 1997, the Sisters knocked on doors, and surveyed over 2,000 students, mostly from public school districts and found that 11% reported missing school because of problems with transportation costs. It's important to remember that "yellow bus" service is free, while public transportation is not. This year's student fares will cost between 75 and 90 cents per ride (depending on how they are purchased).

The Sisters also have a bone to pick with the way Tri-Met has set up what they call the "Fareless Square" program, which allows people to ride free within the downtown area. The Sisters call these programs "corporate welfare," accusing the company of furthering segregation between the business and shopping district and the other, less "developed" residential parts of the city; areas where the poorer people reside and work. In addition, Tri-Met makes riding the bus especially appealing to the employees of larger businesses by allowing their employers to purchase bulk amounts of fares as part of their "Passport programs." Again, the Sisters see this as benefiting those who already have several transportation options.

According to Tri-Met spokesperson, Mary Fetsch, the two programs promote clean air and livability in the city and reflect the city's eco-conscious history. She says the Fareless Square was started over 20 years ago when Portland was committing clean air violations in the 1970s, and adds that transit carries the equivalent of two lanes of traffic on every major thoroughfare to the downtown area. As for the Passport Program, Fetsch says its purpose is to reduce single occupant vehicles, air pollution, and congestion. She also cites that Tri-Met's total service takes 164,000 car trips off the road every day. "The Fareless Square is key to the downtown area," Fetsch says.

So why would the Sisters oppose programs that aim to eliminate air pollution and congestion? Darlene Lombos, Sisters' spokesperson, points out that their pushing for further subsidizing does not mean they oppose these pro-environment efforts.

**Sisters In Action** When you consider the number of low-income students in the Portland school district who may qualify for the passes under the current Tri-Met and Sisters arrangement, the Sisters have lived up to their name, by taking action and applying their power. 21,000 to 22,000 K-12 students qualify for free or reduced lunch meals in the district. Though high school students are only part of this figure. But the number of high school students who will get reduced passes this school year could likely number over 1,000.

And then there are the students who qualify for the lunches but don't apply. To raise awareness about the new bus pass benefits, as well as the other benefits low-income people in Portland can receive, the Portland Public Schools sent out a

letter to all parents the first week of school in 5 languages - English, Spanish, Russian, Cantonese, and Vietnamese. Bob Honson, director of Nutrition Services for Portland Public Schools, said the school district will start processing the applications immediately.

Not only have the Sisters helped make bus service available for low-income students, they've also affected Tri-Met's decision to form a Citizens Advisory Committee of Transportation Equity. Transit equity, which means making sure that everyone who uses mass transit gets fair and equal service, is the backbone of the Sisters campaign.

Tri-Met says the Committee will look at issues including "service to low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, and service for non-English speaking population, youth fares."

The transportation company also says it has student ridership in mind, by establishing special school year student fares at a little less than 60% of the equivalent adult fare, and also changing routes to accommodate schools better. And Tri-Met also says it has programs for low-income people, the elderly and disabled, and transit dependent populations. One of its statements reads, "We find that our best service is provided to transit dependent and low-income areas."

Still, Lombos doesn't think the Committee will work toward real change, calling it a "public relations tactic."

As the Sisters continue to struggle for free bus passes for all students, Fetsch of Tri-Met points out that no transit company in the country gives free bus passes to students. She says that the Committee may consider taking the student pass issue to the state legislature.

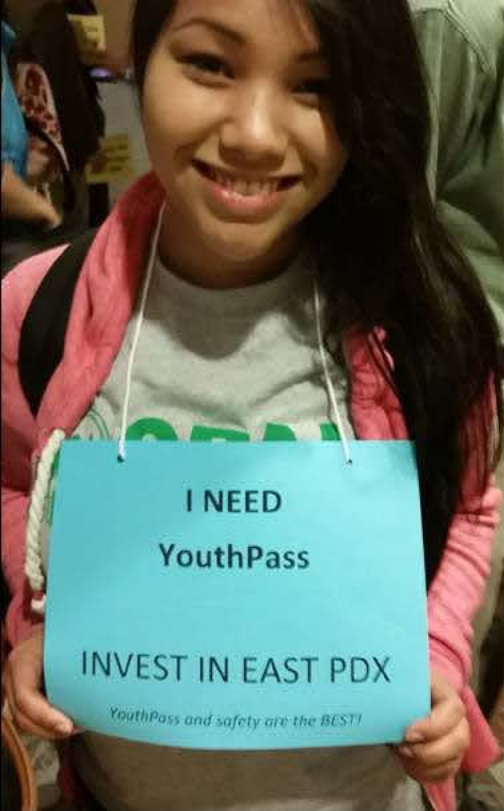
But Lombos sees the transit company's role in the Portland community differently. "It's not a business," she said. "It's a public institution."

And the Sisters would like to see additional programs, such as their campaign to get free passes for all students, take effect at Tri-Met. "We're saying there's a whole group that is transit dependent," Lombos says. "Let's set up programs for everybody."

One of the big questions the Sisters' campaign raises is - can class equality and environmental consciousness exist in a community at the same time? The Sisters think so, and they are going to fight until the two goals can co-exist in their community.

Look into your own community. Are there ways you can follow the Sister's lead in impacting the lives of numerous people-even in what may seem like a small way, like a free bus ride to school? Start by taking the example from your sisters, the Sisters in Action for Power, that is.





# YOUTHPASS TO THE FUTURE

Youth Stories on Public Transit, Challenges and Needs,  
and Our Solution to a Better Future



By Youth Environmental Justice Alliance & OPAL

April 2016

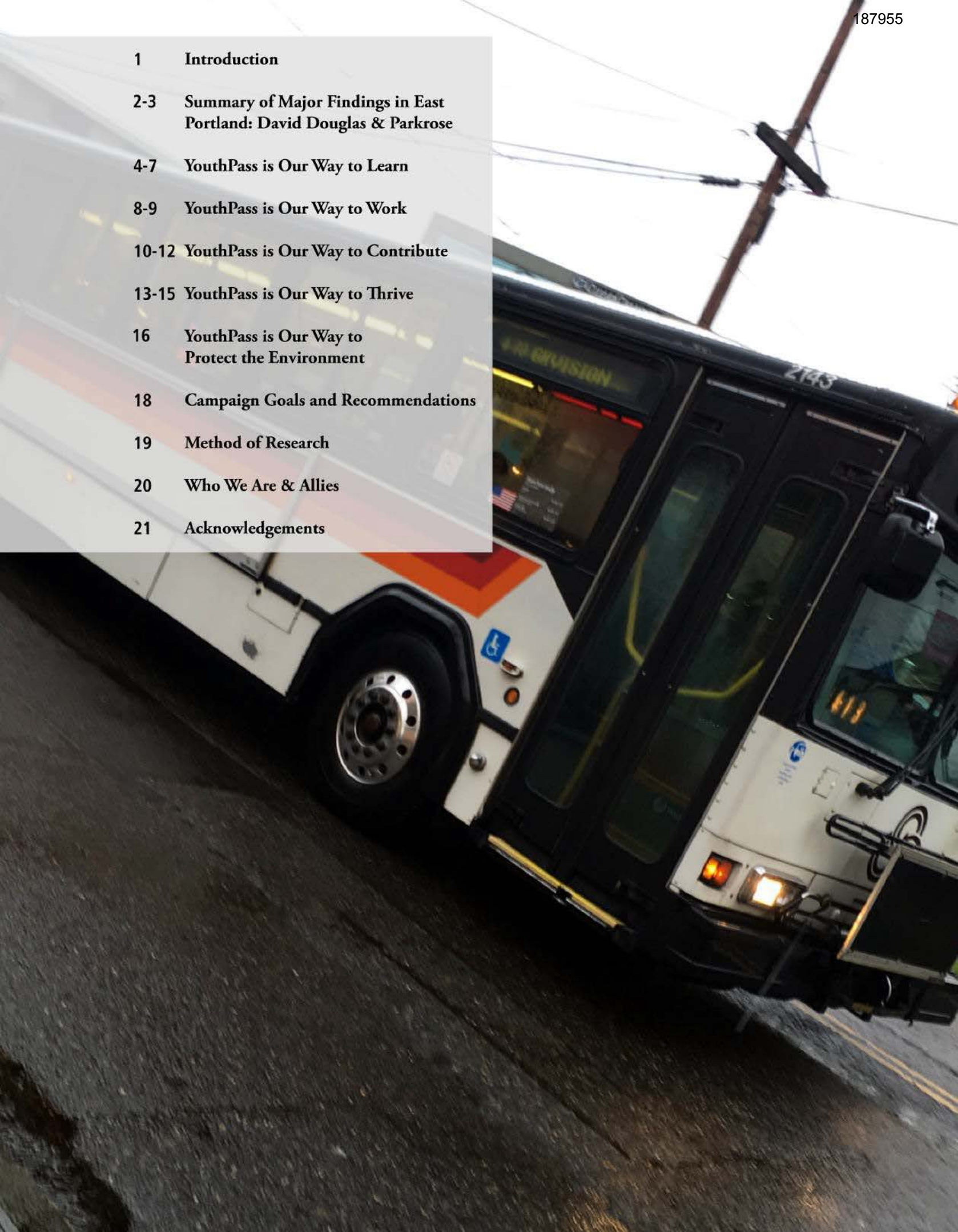
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# YOUTHPASS

## Youth Stories on Public Transit, Challenges and Needs, and Our Solution to a Better Future

### Introduction

Public transportation is a lifeline for young people in Portland to get to school, work, after school programs, sports, appointments, and cultural activities. As cost of living continues to rise and working class families struggle to balance work demands and family, many of us in Portland Metro area depend on TriMet and YouthPass to get to the places we need to go.

### What is YouthPass?

YouthPass is a program that provides free access to TriMet services for students who attend high schools in the Portland Public School district. For a majority of these students, TriMet is their ticket to school. With YouthPass, students do not have to worry about not being able to afford the fare, or being fined for having an expired ticket. They simply show the bus driver their ID cards with the TriMet logo, and are allowed to get on the bus or MAX.

### Youth on TriMet

There are many misconceptions about young people on the buses. A perpetuating narrative that adults have is that young people only cause trouble on the buses. Or that they will only use YouthPass to hang out in the malls. We want to challenge these assumptions. Youth riders are similar to many other riders using public transit. They take TriMet to learn, work, contribute, and thrive. In our report, we want to share youth personal stories because they are often untold and ignored. Having more youth use public transit is also good for our local environment and planet, as it fosters a new generation of transit users and encourages us to rely less on cars. Overall, YouthPass is essential for students to access opportunities that our city has to offer.

### Challenges and Needs of Accessing Public Transit

In recent years, YouthPass has been deprioritized by City officials and has continued to be on the chopping block with every funding cycle. This is a major attack on youth in Portland, especially low-income students and students of color who greatly depend on it. In a 2013 survey administered by Portland Public School District, they found that about 66% of students take TriMet to school.<sup>1</sup> Youth transit needs to be a priority if our city cares about investing in our future. Another major challenge is that East Portland high school students do not have the same access to opportunity. Schools east of 82nd Ave do not have YouthPass. We surveyed more than 2500 students and have learned that many of them rely on TriMet because the yellow school buses are not meeting their transportation needs. East Portland has historically seen underinvestment by both the City of Portland and Multnomah County. East Portland residents have higher poverty rates than the rest of the city, with almost one-quarter of its residents in poverty<sup>2</sup>. Expanding YouthPass to East Portland will help us address equity.

### Our Solution to a Better Future

Youth are the future of our city and our country. Youth have a right to be able to access public transit so they can successfully learn, work to support their families, contribute to our communities, and thrive as healthy and engaged members of our society. YouthPass is our key to this future. With YouthPass to the Future Campaign, we demand YouthPass to be prioritized and permanently funded; expand this transit program to East Portland students, and improve transit services in our school neighborhoods.

<sup>1</sup> Horvick J., & Wubbold A. (January 2014). PPS TriMet YouthPass Survey. DHM Research

<sup>2</sup> Smock, K. (April 2014). 2014 Poverty in Multnomah County.



# SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

## David Douglass High School

High School enrollment: 3097<sup>3</sup>

(includes David Douglas High School, Fir Ridge Campus, and Community Transition)

Qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch: 76.1%

54% of the student body are non-white

**We collected a total of 2100 surveys at David Douglas High School and this is a summary of what we found:**

**Half of the students surveyed (49%) already use TriMet to get to school, home, and other activities.**

- More than half of Black/African American (67%), Hispanic and Asian students (53% each) rely upon TriMet to get to school.

**Many students reported missing school/class because they were not able to catch the yellow school bus in the morning.**

- 41% of the students said they have missed class due to missing the school bus.
- With the highest percentages of Black and Hispanic students (51%, 45%) missing school due to not having an alternative way to get to school.

**Over half of the student population (53%) said having a free transit pass would make it easier to attend school.**

- Majority of students of color (59%) said YouthPass would make it easier for them to get to school; while 41% of White students said the same.

**58% of the students said YouthPass would increase their interest and ability to participate in after school and extra-curricular activities.**

**Majority of the students (73%) said they would utilize YouthPass if it was available at school.**

- Students of color (82%) were more likely to use it than White students (60%).



# IN EAST PORTLAND

## Parkrose High School

High School Enrollment: 926

Qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch: 68%

59% of the student body are non-white

**We collected a total of 258 surveys at Parkrose High School and this is a summary of what we found:**

**Majority of the students surveyed (70%) said they currently use TriMet.**

- About 33% of these students use TriMet at least 4 times a week.

**45% of the students reported that they have missed class due to missing the school bus in the morning.**

- 15% of these students said missing the school bus and consequently missing class has happened more than 5 times.

**Majority of the students (70%) said having a free transit pass would make it easier for them to go to school.**

- More than 80% of American Indian, Pacific Islander, and Black students that were surveyed agreed with this statement

**75% of the students agreed that having a free transit pass would make it more likely for them to participate in extracurricular and volunteer activities.**

**85% of the students said they would use YouthPass if it was available at the school.**

# YOUTHPASS IS OUR WAY

## TO LEARN

*64% of surveyed students at Franklin said YouthPass makes it less likely for them to miss school*

Education is the most important goal for young people, and YouthPass supports that goal. Thousands of us ride TriMet to school. In the survey administered by Portland Public School District in 2013-2014, it stated that 80% of the students had used TriMet at the time of the survey, and two-thirds of the students used TriMet to get to school<sup>4</sup>. This shows that many students use YouthPass to access school and educational opportunities that prepare them for success.

At Franklin High School where students have access to YouthPass, 64% of the surveyed students said YouthPass makes it less likely for them to miss school<sup>5</sup>. YouthPass helps reduce absenteeism and tardiness for students, and supports our ability to be at the school. When young people are not missing classes and school days, they are more likely to have better grades and graduate on time.

Having alternative transportation to school is very important. At a school like David Douglas where the students do not have YouthPass, we found that 41% of the students said they have missed class because they missed the school bus in the morning<sup>6</sup>. Oftentimes, students struggle to find a way to school if they miss the school bus. Parents may need to work and cannot offer a ride, or students have trouble finding money for the bus ticket.

There should be no barriers to accessing education. Transit is an educational right, and YouthPass is our opportunity to learn.

<sup>4</sup> Horvick J., & Wubbold A. (January 2014). PPS TriMet YouthPass Survey. DHM Research

<sup>5</sup> YEJA (2016), YouthPass Survey of 101 students

<sup>6</sup> YEJA (2016), YouthPass Survey of 2200 students



# ELI BRAVE HAWK

## I RIDE BUS LINE #22



My name is Eli Brave Hawk and I am a junior at Parkrose High School. My family has lived in the same house for 25 years in Southeast Portland. Some of my favorite things about living here is going hiking, hanging out in downtown, or just being active with my friends. I usually take bus line #22 when I have to take public transit to school. I also take other buses and the MAX to get me to where I need to be. There was one time when the school bus had left and my dad was too sick to drive me in the morning, so I ended up staying at home all day and missing school. Finding bus fare isn't easy. I stay after school almost every single day and I can't walk home because it's too dark at 7pm. Sometimes when I have to wait for a ride from my family, I end up waiting at the school until 9pm. Not everyone can get picked up whenever they want. I don't actually have a lot of options. YouthPass will help me by opening doors that would otherwise be closed due to a lack of money.





I'm Jeff, a senior from David Douglas High School. Unlike other schools like Franklin and Madison, David Douglas does not offer bus passes to their students. Our school has yellow school buses, which take students to school and home on a regular schedule, and activity buses, which take students home when they stay after school for club activities, meetings, and sports participation. There's only two activity buses. When I first took the activity bus after a Red Cross meeting back, the trip was longer than I ever expected. The bus departed around 4:30 pm and I ended at home around 6:30 pm. I was way behind my schedule. That's why a lot of times, the only transportation I can rely on is the Trimet bus, but I have to pay \$1.25 every time. Sometimes if I left my wallet at home or don't have any change with me, I would have to walk home or catch a ride with friends. Recently I received a monthly bus pass from a volunteer group, and it has made my life a lot of easier. I don't have to stress about money, and I can stay after school more often to participate in clubs and activities. One time I missed my morning school bus, and I ended up walking to the bus stop and taking TriMet to school without being late. That was very helpful! There is a big difference from having a YouthPass and not having it as a student.



**JEFF DENG**  
**I RIDE BUS LINES #71, 4, 9, MAX**



## YVETTE DUMER

### I RIDE BUS LINES #72, 4, MAX

I like taking public transit. It has given me an opportunity to volunteer and discover Portland. While commuting from bus to bus, it made me understand the street names in my neighborhood and other major intersections. I can't help but feel that it isn't fair that my school doesn't provide free transit passes to their students. Our after-school activity buses are crowded. Not to mention, it can take almost two and a half hours to get home. With a YouthPass, I feel like a lot of students would be able to go home faster and not be restricted yellow school bus schedule. There are times that I miss the school bus in the morning, and have to scramble to find money to take TriMet to school. But at times when I really don't have money or my parents aren't home to take me to school, I would not have a way to get there. One time in my freshman year, I stayed home all day because I didn't have a ride to school and could not take TriMet. I think students should not have to worry about getting to school.



My name is Yvette Dumer. I'm 15 years old and I am a sophomore at Franklin High School. I live in the Powellhurst Gilbert neighborhood and it's pretty close to the current Marshall School campus. Taking TriMet to school has been so much easier now. In middle school, my parents and I used to have the hardest time trying to pay for the bus every day. Having YouthPass has allowed me to stay after school for tutoring and club activities, for example Step Up and Black Student Union. Step Up is a program that helps students with school work. Sometimes I have Saturday school and it could be at a different school campus. I would take the bus to attend these sessions. If I did not have YouthPass, I wouldn't be able to get the extra help I need to succeed at school. YouthPass is important because it does help me learn.

## TOMMY JAY LARRACAS

### I RIDE BUS LINES #71, 4



# YOUTHPASS IS OUR WAY TO WORK

*Unfortunately, only 35% of youth in Oregon ages 16-19 are employed, the lowest in recorded history.<sup>7</sup>*

Work is important to young people. Many of us have to support our families' ability to pay basic expenses like rent, food, and utilities. Getting a job is also important for youth because it helps us gain on-the-job experiences and life skills that are essential to our future. Unfortunately, only 35% of youth in Oregon ages 16-19 are employed, the lowest in recorded history.<sup>7</sup> Oregon also has the 17th-lowest youth labor force participation rate in the nation<sup>8</sup>. But with the help of YouthPass, it can connect more young people to jobs and help the unemployment rate. Youth want to work, but are often unable to obtain it because we lack transportation to get us to our jobs.

YouthPass can support our efforts to go job hunting and attend job interviews. Youth will not have to worry about not being able to afford the bus or the MAX. When young people work, we also help our families and the economy. YouthPass connects us to the workforce and allows us the opportunity to develop strong skillsets for our city's future.

<sup>7</sup> Oregon Employment Department. (2014). Endangered: Youth in the Labor Force.

<sup>8</sup> Oregon Employment Department. (2014). Endangered: Youth in the Labor Force.





## MAGALI BONILLA

### I RIDE BUS LINES #72, 20

My name is Magali Bonilla. I am 16 years old and I am currently attending Madison High School. I live with my parents and four siblings.

I use YouthPass to get around Portland. My parents work together from 11:30 to 5:30. I can't depend on them to take me to school, after school extra-curricular activities, or work. YouthPass is essential to me.

A few years ago, I worked at a burrito restaurant on Mississippi Street during the weekends. I would walk to take bus #4 and would ride it for 15 minutes and get off at Mississippi. Those times I would usually save my tips that I earned to pay for the bus fare. I would usually buy the all-day pass so I can also ride the bus home. But for the amount of money I earned, I was not able to save a lot after transportation and other costs.

Riding the bus to work made me feel more independent. It also taught me how to get to places on my own, and it made me feel proud.





# YOUTHPASS IS OUR WAY

## TO CONTRIBUTE

*49% of students at Franklin High School said having YouthPass makes it easier for them to be involved in after school activities and internships<sup>9</sup>.*

Young people in Portland like to volunteer. We like to attend community events and be engaged as active members of society. We have a lot of interests such as sports, photography, music, cultural activities, and arts. We are also very active with school clubs and extracurricular activities. Many of us volunteer at the hospital, neighborhood clean-ups, and soup kitchens. If we can't afford to ride public transit, it means we can't participate and contribute.

In our school survey, 49% of students at Franklin High School said having YouthPass makes it easier for them to be involved in after school activities and internships<sup>9</sup>. Missing out on these opportunities may affect our ability to access higher education. Universities and community colleges care about the character of people they admit; therefore, what you do after school and during weekends tells them a lot about the kind of person you are<sup>10</sup>. For students in East Portland especially, we have a hard time accessing the valuable internships and opportunities that are often concentrated in other neighborhoods. Not being able to get to these resources and opportunities affect our future.

Young people also need a voice. Adults often do not involve us in decision making. And we demand to be able to access these spaces and contribute because we are leaders today and tomorrow.

<sup>9</sup> YEJA (2016), YouthPass Survey of 101 students

<sup>10</sup> Shaevitz, M. (2013, June 11). What College Admissions Offices Look for in Extracurricular Activities. Retrieved from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marjorie-hansen-shaevitz/extra-curricular-activities-college-admission\\_b\\_3040217.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marjorie-hansen-shaevitz/extra-curricular-activities-college-admission_b_3040217.html)



# PHUC NGUYEN

## I RIDE BUS LINES #4, 71

My name is Claire, and I am a senior at Madison High School. I am from St. Louis, Missouri and have moved around quite a bit. I am on the golf team at Madison and I love art; water color in particular. When I moved to Portland, I didn't have a lot of resources to get to where I needed to go. I didn't have the money to be able to buy a bus ticket, so I just didn't go anywhere. After I registered for school I was ecstatic to find out about YouthPass. It meant that I could get to school, join the golf team, and hangout with my friends. I didn't know at the time how YouthPass was funded. When I joined OPAL, I was more than happy to be a part of it. YouthPass gave me that opportunity. Now I'm a leader for YEJA and working to make a difference. YouthPass means everything to me because it gives me opportunities I wouldn't have had otherwise. I have a twin sister that goes to another school. And one time she got a \$600 fine for having a bus ticket that had just expired for a few minutes while she was on the platform and attempting to buy another ticket. My sister has a harder time getting to places because she doesn't have YouthPass. Young people like her can miss out on a lot of opportunities without YouthPass. With a lack of opportunities comes young adults that are not well-rounded and experienced, and that also affects society and our overall future.



# CLAIRE KLINE

## I RIDE BUS LINES #72, 70, 6, AND 4.



My name is Phuc and I am a senior at David Douglas High School. I am involved with Key Club at school. There has been so many times I couldn't go to volunteer events just because I didn't have a ride and it was too far for me to walk. There has been so many times I had to walk home just because I didn't have the money to pay for the bus pass. As a student, I volunteer because I believe giving back to the community is important. Doing different internships is also important because you gain a lot of experiences from it and it can ready you for the future. There is so much I could have done to give back to the communities, to make myself stand out more when it comes to scholarship and to gain valuable skills. I could have done so much more if I had a YouthPass. I think other students just like me would want the opportunity at David Douglas. YouthPass will impact many students.



Hello, my name Tyra Edwards. I am a freshman at Parkrose high school and I am 15 years old. Usually, I ride the school bus to school and back home. But when I do sports or club activities, I either have to take the academic bus, get a ride from my parents or friend, walk, or take TriMet home. I live on Stark and that is kind of far from the school walking-wise, but taking TriMet helps me get home faster. Why I think YouthPass would be great is because I do a lot of things throughout the year and most the time I don't have a way to get back home. Most the time I don't have money for the bus so I try to walk home. But walking home every day is hard because it makes me feet sore. That's why I think having a TriMet pass will help me and a lot of students get home or to their jobs.



**TYRA EDWARDS**  
**I RIDE BUS LINES #71, 22, 4, AND MAX BLUE LINE**



# YOUTHPASS IS OUR WAY TO THRIVE

*In the PPS survey, it found that a quarter of the students used TriMet throughout the week for reasons other than school, after school activities, shopping, and visiting friends<sup>11</sup>*

Youth use TriMet to get to necessary appointments on time and take care of family responsibilities like buying groceries and translating for parents at the hospital. Being able to afford to ride public transit allows us the opportunity to thrive.

It is also important for young people to do the things they want to that supports their development and growth. Many of us take TriMet to travel around Portland and explore our city. We want to be able to get to know our city. We need to be able to access safe places to interact with our peers, our neighbors, and our community.

In the PPS survey, it found that a quarter of the students used TriMet throughout the week for reasons other than school, after school activities, shopping, and visiting friends<sup>11</sup>. Students ride TriMet to attend community events, explore the city, make appointments, and pick up groceries – all important aspects to our ability to thrive.

<sup>11</sup> Horvick J., & Wabbold A. (January 2014). PPS TriMet YouthPass Survey. DHM Research





## MARQUANDRE BROWN

I RIDE BUS LINES #72, 4, 15  
AND MAX GREEN LINE

My name is Marquandre Brown and I am 16 years old. I am a junior at Franklin High School. I am a Deadpool and Hulk fanatic. Ask me any question about them and I may be able to answer. Anyways, back to my YouthPass story, I have used TriMet my whole life and because I've always been low-income, it's not often that we have enough money for transportation. It's crucial for me to have YouthPass. Not only that I am able to go to and from school but I am also able to run errands for my mom. My mom has limited access to transportation so I oftentimes have to pick up medication and groceries for her. YouthPass is very beneficial to me because it provides opportunities to explore and enables me to perform daily tasks at ease.





# MAYLEENA ROBINSON

## I RIDE BUS LINES #72, 4, 9, MAX



I am lit, friendly, and curious. I am the youngest out of 3 siblings. I have one brother and one sister. Going on adventures has always been a big part of my life. Once I entered high school and got YouthPass, I did many great things. With YouthPass, I have been able to explore my city and see its diversity. Because of YouthPass and access to public transit, I was able to attend my first Pride Parade, and learned how to get around the city. I also used my bus pass to go to a poetry event in downtown and it was great. My brother also uses YouthPass to get to and from work, school, and his basketball practices. Since YouthPass is not covered in the summer, I try to use it as much as possible until the end of June. When I don't have YouthPass, I don't do much. I don't have money to buy a bus pass. If something is not within walking distance, I wouldn't be able to participate. Without YouthPass, it would be very difficult for me to explore and be active. My mother can't always buy my brother and me a bus pass. Not having YouthPass means I wouldn't be able to expand my horizons.





# YOUTHPASS IS OUR WAY

## TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

*In Oregon, transportation is the number one cause of carbon emission.<sup>12</sup>*

Public transit plays an important role in helping us protect our local environment and fight climate change. In Oregon, transportation is the number one cause of carbon emission.<sup>12</sup> By investing in our public transit system to make it affordable, accessible, and efficient, we can reduce carbon emissions and climate impact.

The City of Portland have adopted a Climate Action Plan that recommends actions to reduce carbon emissions. The goal for City bureaus is to achieve a 50 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and an 80 percent reduction by 2050.<sup>13</sup> Supporting YouthPass and improving transit access will greatly encourage the next generation to utilize public transit more. Introducing young people to public transit early helps develop them to become more comfortable riding transit, and less dependent on cars.

In addition, East Portland is identified as a critical area when it comes to transit barriers and carbon emissions. About 60% of Portland's households are part of connected neighborhoods that have shown a reduction in carbon emissions due to close access of jobs, businesses, parks, etc. But the other 40% of Portlanders do not have safe and convenient access to transit, jobs, commercial services, and sidewalks, especially critical in East Portland.<sup>14</sup> On top of that, there are high concentrations of air pollution and toxics in East Portland communities. Thus, YouthPass is not only beneficial to our environment, but also to low-income communities and communities of color who are impacted by air pollution every day.

<sup>12</sup> State of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. (2014) Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

<sup>13</sup> City of Portland and Multnomah County. (June 2015). Climate Action Plan Summary; Local Strategies to Address Climate Change

<sup>14</sup> City of Portland and Multnomah County. (June 2015). Climate Action Plan Summary; Local Strategies to Address Climate Change







## CAMPAIGN GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Our main demands** for YouthPass to the Future campaign is to have the Portland Public School District YouthPass permanently funded, expand YouthPass to David Douglas and Parkrose high school, and to achieve frequent bus service around our schools in East Portland.

In the long run, we would like the program to be county-wide so that more youth can access the places they need to in order to learn, thrive, contribute, and work. Our vision is that regardless of where someone lives or go to school, young people should have access to affordable and efficient transit services.

YouthPass to the Future campaign is about addressing equity in East Portland. At least half of the student population at David Douglas and Parkrose High Schools are currently using TriMet. This shows the need for YouthPass and the positive impact the program can have.

Bus lines #4, #71, and #20 around the schools have been identified by TriMet to become frequent service. We believe it is time to expand YouthPass to East Portland.

*These schools are serve some of the most vulnerable constituents in our City and County.*



## METHOD OF RESEARCH

This report is a result of 6 months of qualitative and quantitative research through surveys and youth story collection. We have distributed the surveys to Portland high schools, such as Franklin, David Douglas, and Parkrose. At the end, we collected a total of 2500 surveys. After analyzing the surveys, we selected key data to present in the report. The writing was done by YEJA youth members and edited by OPAL staff. In addition, we also reviewed existent research and articles on YouthPass to better inform ourselves on the issue of youth transit.



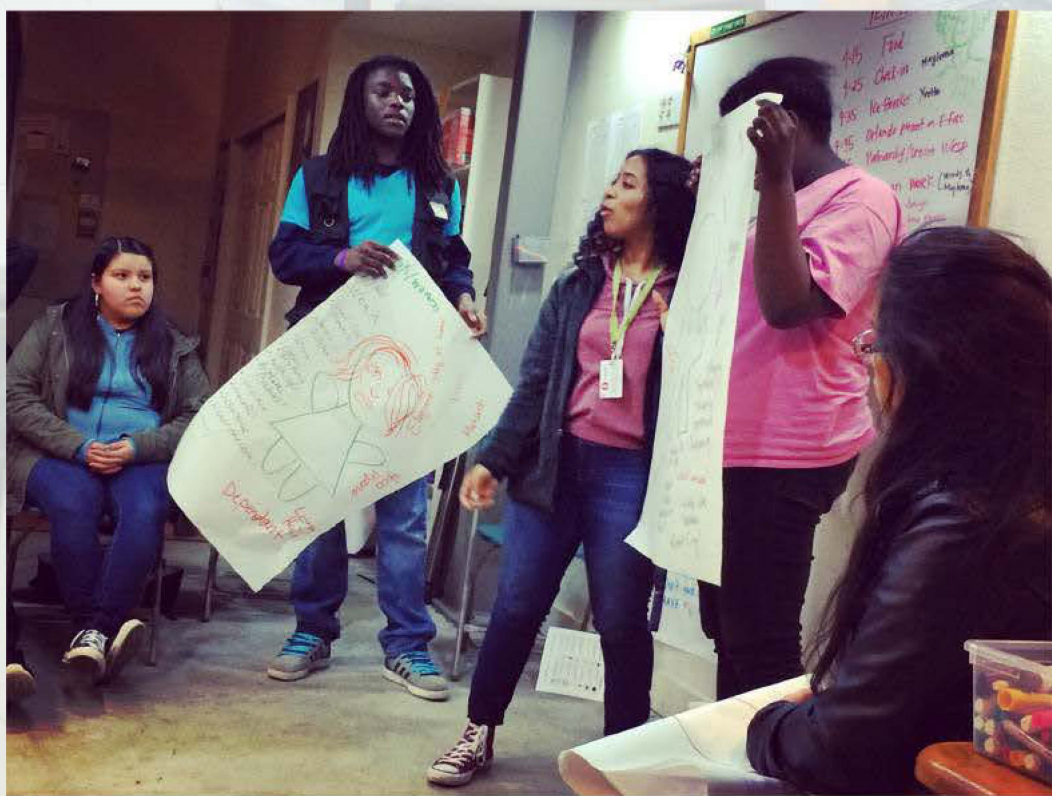
# WHO WE ARE AND ALLIES

YEJA stands for Youth Environmental Justice Alliance and it is a youth-led group that meets every Thursday of the week. YEJA was created in August 2015 and focuses on social justice and environmental justice issues. Our first ever campaign is YouthPass to the Future.

YEJA believes that all youth can be leaders and have a voice that should be heard and valued. This is why our meetings and work are led by youth interns and members. Our group represents students from Franklin, Madison, David Douglas High Schools, as well as Harrison Park Middle School and Portland OIC Rosemary Anderson High School.

Our allies include the Multnomah Youth Commission, Bus Riders Unite, APANO, ALLY, Oregon Walks, Verde, National Safe Routes to School, Bicycle Transportation Alliance, Rose Community Development, and Transportation Justice Alliance.

Thank you for endorsing our campaign and for supporting our campaign events. We look forward to gaining more allies in our work!





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OPAL is a grassroots non-profit organization that works on Environmental Justice issues. Youth Environmental Justice Alliance (YEJA) is the youth branch of OPAL dedicated to working on issues through youth perspective and leadership.

We appreciate all the YEJA members that have provided feedback, planning support, and leadership in this campaign report. Thank you Mindy Li, Yvette Dumer, Jeff Deng, Magali Bonilla, Mayleena Robinson, Quandre Brown-Rhone, Phuc Nguyen, Marbrisa De Luna, Ramon De Luna, Tommy Jay Larracas, Claire Kline, Sincere Peters, Trey Slyapich, Shocka Mgbadigha, Na'Tori Crain Thompson, Karen Galicia, Francisco Lopez, Ming Chen, Nora, Ailani Palacios, Jonathan Ma, Jade Nicanor, Jack Man Tse, Gracie Elliot, Deja Collins, Ezekiel Powell, Nancy Garcia, Nicole Andino, Hylah Wells, Quanjiao Zhao, Ricky Schott, Liwen Xue, and Shan Deng.

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Photos in this report were taken by YEJA members and YEJA organizer. This report was designed by N.O. Bonzo and Jennifer Phung.



