Transit Fare Subsidies

Transit fare subsidies encourage the switch from cars to public transportation modes by providing free or reduced fares on mass transit. As youth and senior community members are often more likely to have low or no incomes, they are often more reliant on public transportation. Fare subsidies can help improve equitable access to affordable transportation options. In May 2022, SANDAG and its collaborating partners launched the Youth Opportunity Pass Program, offering free public transit to anyone age 18 and under. This program is funded by SANDAG as part of its Transit Equity Pilot and aims to connect youth to more educational, vocational, social, and errand-based opportunities throughout San Diego. While the pilot program has been extended through June 2024, making it permanent and expanding it to other vulnerable community members would further advance transportation equity across San Diego.

Extension of Youth Opportunity Pass
Source: SANDAG, 2023

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Estimated Initiation Timeframe
1-3 years

Implementation Cost
**$$**$$

Potential Funding Sources
» General Fund
» Regional funds

Leading Department
SANDAG

Collaborating Entities
MTS, NCTD, Transportation Department, partner agencies

Relevance to Mobility Master Plan Goals
Goals 1, 2, 5, 6

Relevance to Climate Action Plan Policies
Policies 3.2a, 3.2 SA-1, 3.2 SA-2

Incorporating Community Engagement
The community highlighted affordability as a key challenge to their mobility, especially for those below 24 years of age. Transit fare subsidies advance transportation equity by providing greater access to a wider range of affordable mobility options for low-income community members.

PROGRAM IN ACTION

Los Angeles Metro (Metro) has a series of programs aimed at reducing the transportation cost burden for low-income residents, students, elderly individuals, and people with disabilities. The GoPass fareless pilot program, launched in 2021, provides unlimited free rides on Metro's bus and rail as well as other partner transit agencies to all K-14 students. Metro also offers fare discounts on transit passes for Metro and other participating transit agencies to low-income riders under the Low-Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) program. Seniors, college students, and people with disabilities are also eligible for reduced fares. More information can be found at: https://www.metro.net/riding/fares/

GoPass
Source: LA Metro