

Youth Opportunity Pass Pilot Program: Comprehensive Program Report

December 2023

SANDAG

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Executive Summary

SANDAG launched the Youth Opportunity Pass pilot program, the flagship program of our Social Equity Early Action Transit Pilot, in May 2022. The program, designed in collaboration with local community-based organizations, provides fare-free public transportation to all youth age 18 and under on all Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and North County Transit District (NCTD) services. With this program, young people from across San Diego County can take the bus to school, ride the COASTER to the beach, and explore internship and recreational opportunities on the Trolley without worrying about cost. As part of the program, SANDAG, MTS, NCTD, and our community partners have distributed more than 50,000 free PRONTO cards to youth across the region, and over 100,000 more have signed up through the PRONTO mobile app on their smartphone.

SANDAG was proud to collaborate with several local community-based organizations on the design and implementation of this program. Many of these organizations have been advocating for a program like the Youth Opportunity Pass for more than a decade. With their help, the program has successfully served communities in need throughout the San Diego region. By working directly with our network of community partners, we were able to ensure that the program was designed and implemented in a way that was accessible and understandable to the communities who need it most. We extend our deep gratitude to the community-based organizations (CBOs) who worked with us over the course of more than a year to make this program possible:

- Mid-City CAN
- City Heights CDC
- Environmental Health Coalition
- Urban Collaborative Project
- Casa Familiar
- Alliance for Regional Solutions

Since then, San Diego County youth have taken advantage of no-cost access to the region’s expansive transit network over 11 million times. Ridership has increased and personal access and mobility for the region’s youth has expanded dramatically. SANDAG has continued working with our community partners to ensure the success of the program and provided a stipend for outreach activities to our community partner network. This collaboration has allowed the program to thrive through close collaboration with these and more than 100 other partners, including schools, CBOs, and others to distribute over 50,000 PRONTO cards and register more than 150,000 youth transit rider accounts. Outreach has been focused in disadvantaged communities for youth who are less likely to have access to a smartphone that can be used to access the PRONTO mobile app, and informational materials were produced in 14 languages to ensure the program is accessible to youth and families from all backgrounds throughout the region.

The Youth Opportunity Pass has increased transit ridership among youth, promoting sustainable transportation and helping families in disadvantaged communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the program, regional youth transit ridership was approximately 345,000 monthly rides from about 16,000 individual youth. The Youth Opportunity Pass has nearly doubled the average number of monthly rides to approximately 725,000 and has more than tripled the number of youth regularly riding transit, with over 50,000 unique riders in the busiest months. Disadvantaged communities and routes near schools have seen the largest increases in youth ridership.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, school attendance has declined nationwide for elementary, middle, and high school students. One goal of the Youth Opportunity Pass was to ensure that students could get back to school when in-person classes resumed. Thanks to a partnership with the San Diego Unified School District, SANDAG has identified that schools accessible via transit have seen a 27% stronger attendance recovery than those primarily accessible via automobile. By providing a reliable ride to and from school, we can combat chronic absenteeism and ensure that state education funding continues to flow to our region.

During the first year of the program, SANDAG conducted an impact study that included surveys of youth using the program and focus groups with the youth who benefited. The impact study found that 93% of participants are riding transit more now than they did before the program, and 79% of participants indicated that they would continue to ride transit when they become adults. Additionally, the youth said that the program grants them greater independence and the ability to spend time with friends, make money for themselves and their families, and take care of their siblings. Youth in focus groups were enthusiastic about the program, encouraging friends to ride, taking siblings to school, and exploring the San Diego region without the need for a car.

An additional goal of the Youth Opportunity Pass and the 2021 Regional Plan is to reduce regional vehicle miles traveled in order to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To evaluate this goal, SANDAG conducted an analysis of greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants reduced by the program, consistent with the methodology used for the Regional Plan. The analysis found that the Youth Opportunity Pass has reduced annual regional vehicle miles traveled by nearly 7 million. This reduction in driving leads to improvements to air quality amounting to 4.7 million pounds of carbon dioxide saved per year as well as reductions in other pollutants.

The Youth Opportunity Pass has been a successful pilot but relies on approximately \$6.5 million annually of temporary funding from the federal Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program. SANDAG must continue working with our regional, state, and federal partners to identify a renewable funding source that will continue the program without impacting transit agencies' operating budgets. SANDAG is currently exploring equity-based fare structure scenarios that may include a permanent Youth Opportunity Pass, but new funding is necessary to maintain transit operating budgets and acceptable service levels with reduced fare revenue.

Each of these evaluations is detailed within this report. More information about the program is available online at sandag.org/yop, and detailed metrics and data about the program are available on SANDAG's Open Data Portal at sandag.org/yopdata.

SANDAG is proud of the success of the Youth Opportunity Pass and the opportunities it is providing to San Diego youth. We look forward to the identification of a permanent funding source and the continuation of the program beyond the pilot phase to benefit young San Diegans for generations to come.

Outreach and Distribution Strategy

Outreach Strategy

In designing the outreach strategy for the program, SANDAG worked directly with the six CBOs involved in the design of the program. To ensure that outreach was accessible and community-oriented, we designed a comprehensive toolkit of outreach materials for schools, community organizations, and other agencies to use when marketing the program. This toolkit included flyers, graphics, and sample text for social media and newsletters, all of which were produced in both English and Spanish. The flyer was produced in 12 additional languages to span a broad spectrum of languages spoken by families and youth in the San Diego region, especially those who recently arrived as immigrants and refugees. The toolkit and technical assistance from SANDAG staff provided schools and other organizations with the tools necessary to notify families they serve about the program and assist with issues.

SANDAG also partnered with the County Office of Education to disseminate information about the program to each school district in the region, who were instructed to distribute information to each of their respective school principals. As a result, many schools reached out to either SANDAG or MTS to obtain bulk orders of physical passes, promotional materials, and online pass setup instructions for their students. SANDAG's outreach team followed up with schools in high-need areas of the region, focusing on schools with high Free Reduced Lunch percentages who had not yet received passes to establish a contact at each institution who could receive passes and information about the program. We also established a dedicated email for inquiries about the program. Email questions are frequently received from youth riders, parents, school administrators, and organizations on a wide range of topics, from help signing , or registering for a pass, to bulk requests for passes from schools and organizations. Riders and those interested are also directed to SANDAG's program webpage for more information.

Press Relations

A major part of the program's outreach strategy included ensuring adequate press coverage in local media, where we could reach community members from every portion of the region with millions of impressions. SANDAG organized a major press conference to announce the start of the program on April 15, 2022, in coordination with MTS, NCTD, and other local agencies and organizations. The press conference was hosted at Old Town Transit Center to highlight services provided by both transit agencies and included representatives from the agencies involved in implementing the program, the superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District, and a youth community representative from Mid-City CAN. Reactions to the press conference were extremely positive, with coverage on every major local news station and some print media as well.

On the first day of the program, County Supervisor Nora Vargas held a press event on transit with youth from San Ysidro, riding along with them to school in the morning. This unique event highlighted the lived experiences of youth using transit on a regular basis. Multiple local media outlets attended, and the event was well-covered on local news, bolstering the image of the program as it launched.

SANDAG and our partners continued to promote the program through the media, with an additional press conference hosted by MTS at Herbert Hoover High School in August 2022, encouraging students returning to school to sign up for the program and get a pass if they did not already have one. In February 2023, SANDAG celebrated the 5 millionth YOP ride and announced a temporary extension of the pilot program at another press conference held at SANDAG's downtown San Diego offices. Media interest has remained high, with multiple stories airing each time a press event has been held.

Distribution Strategy

When designing the program with local CBOs, it became apparent that one of the most important aspects would be the collection of adequate data to analyze the program. For this reason, the program was implemented within the existing PRONTO fare payment structure, with youth riders using the same fare media as other riders but without the need for payment. With this structure, however, came challenges of distribution and accessibility of fare media for youth throughout the region. With the PRONTO fare payment system available as a physical smartcard or via a smartphone mobile application, we had to ensure that the significant portion of youth without a smartphone still had access to the program. SANDAG has and continues to work with our partners to distribute PRONTO cards to those who needed them most.

A webinar hosted by SANDAG allowed local schools and organizations the opportunity to hear about the program and how they could help implement it in their community. Organizations received outreach strategies, materials, and the opportunity to request PRONTO cards for their students and community members. Representatives from over 120 organizations attended and were able to pick up passes from SANDAG or have them delivered in the following weeks. In total, SANDAG distributed more than 10,000 PRONTO cards during this first wave of outreach to organizations based throughout the county, and our partners at MTS and NCTD distributed thousands more to their riders.

More than 20,000 PRONTO cards were distributed at the beginning of the program, and SANDAG has continued to distribute cards proactively, ensuring that local schools are aware of the program and have PRONTO cards in stock for students who need them, with a focus on schools in disadvantaged communities and those with a high percentage of low-income students. In total, the three agencies have distributed more than 50,000 PRONTO cards to local youth for free. Due to our outreach and education efforts, there are over 150,000 total youth accounts active within the PRONTO fare payment system, including at least 50,000 cards and approximately 100,000 youth who have signed up and access transit via their smartphone.

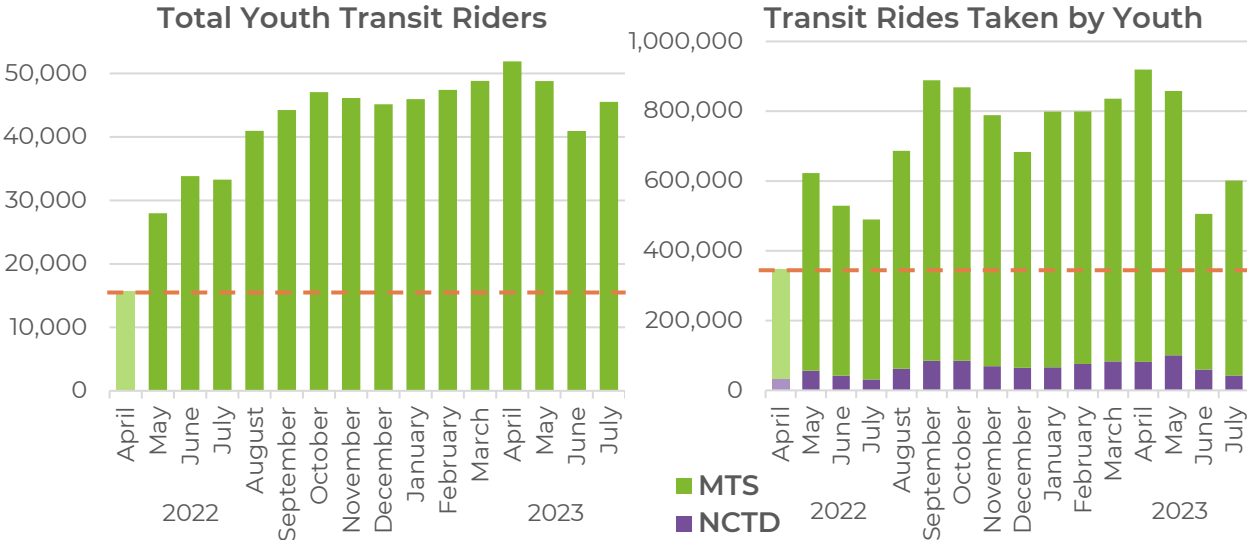
Impacts on Transit Ridership

During the COVID-19 pandemic, transit ridership nationwide plummeted as many people stayed home from work and school. In San Diego, transit ridership collapsed at the beginning of the pandemic.¹ Due to increased safety measures and an infusion of federal relief funds, MTS and NCTD were able to maintain most of their services, allowing them to easily scale up and handle increased ridership as commuters began returning to work and tourists came back to San Diego.

In April 2022, transit ridership in San Diego had made strides to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic but was still below pre-pandemic levels. Likewise, youth ridership was down, and only 345,000 rides were taken by 16,000 youth that month, a pattern seen across similar months and ridership demographics both in San Diego and elsewhere. When the Youth Opportunity Pass program launched the next month, ridership increased markedly, with more than 650,000 rides taken across MTS and NCTD systems by nearly 28,000 individual young people. As word about the program spread and young people continued to ride transit throughout the region, program ridership continued to increase. For the return of school in September, over 900,000 transit rides were taken by more than 44,000 young San Diegans. By the end of the school year, over 50,000 youth were regularly riding transit to destinations across San Diego County, and an average of just over 725,000 transit rides were taken by youth each month.

When analyzing transit ridership changes since the launch of the Youth Opportunity Pass program, ridership figures from April 2022 are used as a base condition for comparison. At the time this report was prepared, comprehensive ridership information was available through the end of July 2023, so all analysis relating to transit ridership will reflect the first fifteen months of the program, starting in May 2022 and ending in July 2023. The following sections describe ridership trends over the course of the program, and more detailed ridership statistics and information can be found in **Appendix A** and at sandag.org/yopdata.

Figure 1: Changes in youth ridership during the Youth Opportunity Pass



¹ MTS Fiscal Year 2020 Performance Monitoring Report

Bus Ridership Impacts

Buses are the backbone of San Diego County's transit system with a combined network of more than 130 bus routes that serve tens of millions of riders each year. Many bus routes directly serve points of interest like schools, doctor's offices, and shopping centers that people, especially youth, need to access on a regular basis. Over the first fifteen months of the Youth Opportunity Pass, the program provided 7.1 million bus rides to youth across the region, including 6.2 million on MTS services and over 900,000 on NCTD services. These bus rides have been the most impactful in disadvantaged communities, where some bus routes saw an increase of over 200% in youth ridership. Some consistent themes emerged when evaluating routes with large youth ridership populations and large increases due to the Youth Opportunity Pass. Many of these routes serve public schools and disadvantaged communities, and many of them are routes that were already frequented by youth before the program. This suggests that many young people were already riding transit to school, but the Youth Opportunity Pass has enabled them to ride more frequently and bring friends and siblings along with them. The routes with exceptionally high Youth Opportunity Pass ridership are detailed below. These include the routes that both carry the largest number of youth on an average weekday and saw the largest percentage increases in youth ridership compared to before the program. They are included as examples and are not an exhaustive list of routes with benefits for youth riders. "Typical" youth ridership is drawn from October 2022, when school fully returned to session and most youth had enrolled in the program.

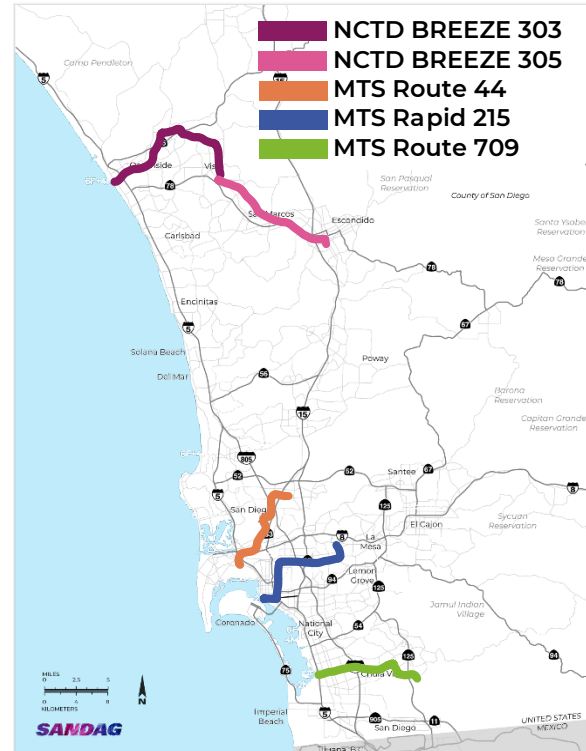


Figure 2: Bus routes in the region with significant youth ridership increases due to the program

MTS Route 44: Old Town San Diego, Linda Vista, Clairemont Mesa, Kearny Mesa **681 typical weekday youth riders, an increase of 180%**

Route 44 connects students in Linda Vista and Clairemont Mesa to Kearny High School, Mark Twain High School, and San Diego Mesa College, as well as many local elementary and middle schools. It facilitates easy transfers and connections at the Old Town Transit Center.

MTS Rapid 215: Downtown San Diego, North Park, City Heights, College Area **573 typical weekday youth riders, an increase of 147%**

Rapid 215 connects students in North Park and City Heights to Herbert Hoover High School, San Diego High School, and San Diego City College, as well as many elementary and middle schools. It also provides access to Balboa Park and connections at many transit centers.

MTS Route 709: Chula Vista

660 typical weekday youth riders, an increase of 221%

Route 709 connects students to Hilltop High School, Bonita Vista High School, Eastlake High School, Southwestern College, and several elementary and middle schools. It also provides easy connections to the Blue Line Trolley and *Rapid 225*.

NCTD BREEZE 303: Oceanside, Vista

488 typical weekday youth riders, an increase of 157%

BREEZE 303 connects students to Oceanside High School, Vista Academy, and several elementary and middle schools. It also provides access to the beach in Oceanside and transfers to the SPRINTER and COASTER for easy access to more destinations.

NCTD BREEZE 305: Vista, San Marcos, Escondido

287 typical weekday youth riders, an increase of 209%

BREEZE 305 connects students to Mission Hills High School, Palomar College, and multiple elementary and middle schools. It facilitates easy transfers to the SPRINTER as well as MTS Rapid and Rapid Express to San Diego.

Rail Ridership Impacts

For longer trips in certain portions of the region, rail transit is also an option. MTS operates three light rail Trolley lines, and NCTD operates the COASTER commuter rail and the SPRINTER hybrid rail services. Together, these rail services provide high-speed transit and access to many activity centers, including our region's major universities, employment centers, and the international border at San Ysidro.

MTS Trolley

12,122 typical weekday youth riders, an increase of 600% across 3 lines

The Trolley provides direct service to many schools along all three of its three services. The Trolley also provides regional access for youth who commute across the international border at San Ysidro, including many community college students. The Youth Opportunity Pass has enabled many students at charter schools like The Preuss School to get to school reliably every day and is providing access to many extracurricular and recreational activities at Old Town, Petco Park, Fashion Valley, and more.

NCTD COASTER and SPRINTER

4,616 typical weekday youth riders, an increase of 153% across both services

The COASTER and SPRINTER provide fast and convenient transit connections for youth in North County. The SPRINTER connects students directly to Palomar College and Cal State San Marcos, expanding educational opportunities for North County youth. Many young people from coastal North County are able to take the COASTER more regularly because of the Youth Opportunity Pass. This enabled access to many regional destinations, from beaches in Oceanside and Encinitas to Old Town or Seaport Village in San Diego.

Potential Impacts on School Attendance

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, chronic absenteeism at schools across the country has been on the rise². A recent study found that nearly one in three students is chronically absent from school, meaning they miss at least 10% of instructional days throughout the course of the year³. This is more than double the rate of chronic absenteeism before the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the US Department of Education. Chronic absenteeism disproportionately affects students with disabilities and Black, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander students⁴. The Youth Opportunity Pass helps provide reliable transportation to help students get to school consistently, which can promote better educational outcomes for students and bring more state education funding into the region. SANDAG partnered with the San Diego Unified School District to review attendance at schools throughout the district and compare attendance between the 2018-2019 school year, the 2021-2022 school year, and the 2022-2023 school year. San Diego Unified educates more than 110,000 students and is by far the largest district in the county. The following sections describe attendance trends throughout the district within those timeframes, and more detailed attendance statistics and information can be found in **Appendix B**.

Attendance Before and During COVID-19

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, schools in the San Diego Unified School District recorded an average attendance of 93.9%. After over a year of virtual instruction, San Diego schools returned to in-person learning for the 2021-2022 academic year. Due to lingering concerns and effects of the pandemic, attendance was lower, with district schools reporting an average attendance of 89.2%. This decrease was in line with larger trends from around the nation of lower school attendance and higher rates of chronic absenteeism.

Attendance With the Youth Opportunity Pass

As the COVID-19 pandemic waned further, most pandemic-related restrictions and requirements were removed by the start of the 2022-2023 academic year. This was also the first full academic year that the Youth Opportunity Pass was in effect for San Diego students. During the 2022-2023 academic year, district schools reported an average attendance of 90.8%, an increase from the previous year. Overall average attendance increased by 1.7%, with 156 of the 169 schools with accurate attendance counts reporting an increase in attendance, compared to just 13 that reported a decrease in attendance.

² [White House: Chronic Absenteeism & Disrupted Learning Require an All-Hands-on-Deck Approach](#)

³ [McKinsey: What it would take for US schools to fully recover from COVID-19](#)

⁴ [US Department of Education: Chronic Absenteeism in the Nation's Schools](#)

Methodology

Attendance data from the San Diego Unified School District was evaluated for changes in year-over-year attendance. The data includes attendance percentages from schools under the District’s supervision from three academic years: the 2018-2019 year as a baseline for attendance before the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021-2022 academic year to understand attendance patterns in a post-COVID, pre-Youth Opportunity Pass year; and the 2022-2023 academic year to understand attendance patterns with the Youth Opportunity Pass.

Geospatial analysis was also performed to identify schools within ¼-mile of a transit stop served by MTS bus or Trolley service. Attendance patterns at schools close to transit and those without transit access were evaluated separately to determine differences in attendance rates between schools that are transit accessible and those that are not. Out of the 169 schools analyzed, 114 were classified as transit accessible, and 55 were inaccessible.

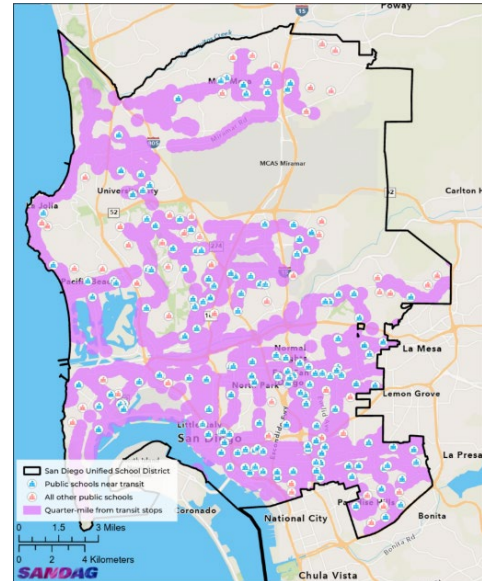


Figure 3: San Diego Unified schools included in the analysis

Results

The evaluation found that average attendance increased after the implementation of the Youth Opportunity Pass. While district schools that are not transit-accessible saw an average increase in attendance of approximately 1.8%, schools that are accessible via transit saw attendance increase by an average of 2.3%. These data suggest that transit-accessible schools saw a 27% higher attendance recovery than those without transit access once the Youth Opportunity Pass became available.

Table 1: Summary of changes in attendance

Transit Accessibility	Number of schools	2021-2022 average attendance	2022-2023 average attendance	Change in attendance
Yes	114	89.4	91.4	+ 2.3%
No	55	90.5	92.1	+ 1.8%
Change figures denote relative change. Source: San Diego Unified School District				

Many schools that have transit access are in lower-income neighborhoods and disadvantaged communities, the same neighborhoods that have historically struggled with lower attendance and high absenteeism. Meanwhile, many newer schools in more affluent neighborhoods lack sufficient connections to transit infrastructure but have historically seen better attendance due to the socioeconomic standing of their students and families. The Youth Opportunity Pass may have helped narrow that achievement gap by providing safe and reliable transportation.

The preliminary results from this analysis suggest that the Youth Opportunity Pass may have helped bolster attendance recovery at San Diego Unified schools. While the differences may be nuanced and vary across communities, this could warrant further study with refined methodology and an increased scope that evaluates schools throughout the entire region. Understanding the true impact of transit availability on school attendance will help SANDAG in its pursuit of continued transit accessibility and a future Youth Opportunity Pass program.

Impacts on Families and Youth

San Diego County is an exceptionally expensive place to live; recent reports rank San Diego as the least affordable city in the country⁵. Families throughout our region struggle with the costs of rent, groceries, utility bills, and of course, transportation, all of which have been exacerbated by inflation in recent years. This program was designed to ease this burden for families, reducing transportation costs and freeing up resources for parents and young people to make ends meet while also removing barriers standing in the way of youth accessing various socioeconomic advancement opportunities.

SANDAG evaluated the effectiveness of the Youth Opportunity Pass as a whole, along with its key goals through the Transit Equity Pilot Study in Spring 2023. The study consisted of a survey (available online and in print, in both Spanish and English) and a set of focus groups, held virtually at times that participants identified as most convenient for them. Both the survey and focus groups were targeted to YOP participants under the age of 19. The survey received over 1,100 responses from youth throughout the region, including a sample of youth from every subregion of the county. Focus group participants were chosen at random from survey-takers who expressed interest in sharing more details about their experience, with a total of 22 youth participating across three focus group sessions. The focus groups were offered in both English and Spanish, but all participants opted to participate in English. The participants were selected to mirror a relatively proportional breakdown of the ethnicities and geographic locations within the San Diego region. Focus group participants were compensated for their time and survey-takers were incentivized to complete the survey via a gift card sweepstakes.

Survey and Focus Group Themes

Throughout the course of the study, five major themes emerged from both survey-takers and focus group participants. They shared that the YOP:

- Saved young people and their families money
- Reduced their stress and worry
- Helped them balance family responsibilities
- Enabled them to access more places and activities
- Allowed youth to have more independence

The following sections describe the findings within each category, and more detailed survey and focus group information can be found in the full impact study report in **Appendix C**.

⁵ [US News Most Expensive Places to Live in the U.S. in 2023-2024](#)

Saving youth and families money

In open-ended questions, respondents commented about how the Youth Opportunity Pass has helped to alleviate financial concerns for youth and their families. Access to the Youth Opportunity Pass allowed families to use transit more regularly and eased increased costs of living. Families now use these extra funds to afford groceries, utilities, and more.

Extending YOP would help me and my family because we need to save money because my Dad doesn't have a job at the moment and having the pass helps us save money.

Survey Respondent, 15 years old, Barrio Logan

Before the Youth Opportunity Pass, I would pay for the regular pass myself. Right now, I am actually saving enough money to be able to move out of my parents' home.

Focus Group Participant, 17 years old, Mira Mesa

Reducing stress and worry

Another common theme was that the Youth Opportunity Pass relieved overall stress for both youth and their families. In particular, young people and families with limitations such as disabilities, homelessness, or illness discussed these benefits.

El YOP me ayuda demasiado a llegar a mi escuela y trabajo ya que mis padres no me pueden llevar y traer. Me hace sentir autosuficiente.

[Translation] The YOP helps me a lot to get to school and work since my parents can't take me or pick me up. It makes me feel self-sufficient.

Survey Respondent, 17 years old, Midway

I used to be an hour late to school like every day, but now with the pass I get there faster just because my parents don't have to worry about traffic.

Focus Group Participant, 14 years old, Lemon Grove

Balancing family responsibilities

Youth in many under-resourced families across our region share family responsibilities with their parents. Respondents indicated that the Youth Opportunity Pass has helped them balance those responsibilities, providing a ride to and from school when parents have inflexible schedules and allowing them to assist younger siblings.

I am able to arrive to school on time without any issues and my family doesn't have to worry about being late to pick me and my siblings up.

Survey Respondent, 14 years old, Vista

My mom works nights, so anytime I wanted a ride home, I'd have to say, "Hey, can you give me a ride?" She was consistently losing sleep by giving me rides places. When this program started, she didn't have to worry about it.

Focus Group Participant, 16 years old, La Mesa

Enabling access to more places & activities

Respondents noted that they have been able to travel to more destinations and participate in more activities because of the Youth Opportunity Pass, including school extracurriculars and doctor's appointments. Additionally, they've been able to explore other destinations in the region, opening doors that they could not access before this program.

I often use the YOP to go to doctor's appointments when my mom can't take time off work to drive me there because I have a lot of doctor's appointments.

Focus Group Participant, 18 years old, Rolando Village

Having the Youth Opportunity Pass has helped me so much. Before, I would have had to give up on extracurricular activities because no one was able to transport me. But I am now able to go to the classes I haven't been able to go. This pass gives me the freedom to transport to wherever I need to go without having to ask my parents to leave work.

Survey Participant, 15 years old, Linda Vista

Allowing independence for youth

Survey respondents and focus group participants shared that they now have a greater sense of independence and freedom. For young people without a vehicle at home, the Youth Opportunity Pass provides reliable transportation without depending on a ride from someone else. Some were even able to get a job because of the Youth Opportunity Pass.

Es muy importante para ahorrar tiempo y para que los jóvenes lleguen a tiempo de clase y para que los jóvenes sean más independientes.

[Translation] It's very important to save time and for young people to arrive on time to class and for young people to be more independent.

Survey Respondent, 15 years old, Clairemont

Free transit was kind of like a lifeline when I didn't have friends to offer me rides. It was very helpful, so I didn't have to worry about getting to places.

Focus Group Participant, 17 years old, Carlsbad

Impacts on Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Air Quality

As an early implementation item of the 2021 Regional Plan, the Youth Opportunity Pass included goals to promote environmental justice in disadvantaged communities identified by CalEnviroScreen 4.0 by promoting transit access, improving local air quality, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.⁶ To fulfill the requirements of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funding used for the Youth Opportunity Pass pilot, SANDAG conducted an analysis of greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants reduced by the program. This analysis is consistent with other programs utilizing similar funding sources and with methodology used for the Regional Plan.

Methodology

For this evaluation, the total number of new annual transit trips induced by the Youth Opportunity Pass was calculated based on transit ridership data from Fiscal Years 2019 and 2023. An average trip length of 4.4 miles was assumed for all modes except COASTER, consistent with the average K-12 trip distance used in SANDAG’s modeling for the 2021 Regional Plan. COASTER trips were calculated using true average trip length due to the different style of service on the long-distance, zone-based system.

Findings for vehicle miles traveled reductions were used to calculate estimations of reductions in the pollutants specified by CMAQ guidelines (ROG, NOx, PM2.5, and CO), CO2, and gasoline fuel using EMFAC v2017, consistent with the air quality conformity analysis that SANDAG submitted as part of the 2023 RTIP. An adjustment of 1/3 was used to account for new trips that would not have been made with a vehicle without the program. More detailed methodology and calculations can be found in **Appendix D**.

Results

Based on ridership data from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023, the Youth Opportunity Pass reduced regional annual vehicle miles traveled by an estimated 6,996,372. Based on EMFAC analysis, this results in an annual savings of 247,999 gallons of gasoline, reducing overall annual carbon dioxide emissions by 4,684,772 pounds.

Table 2: Annual Emissions Reductions Estimates

Reduction Measure	Units	FY23 Annual Unadjusted Reduction	FY23 Daily Unadjusted Reduction	FY23 Annual 1/3 Adjusted Reduction	FY23 Annual 1/2 Adjusted Reduction
VMT	Miles	10,494,034	33,852	6,996,372	5,247,017
ROG	Pounds	2,597	8.4	1,732	1,299
NOx	Pounds	1,772	5.7	1,181	886
CO2	Pounds	7,026,806	22,667.1	4,684,772	3,513,403
PM2.5	Pounds	452	1.5	302	226
CO	Pounds	21,978	70.9	14,653	10,989
Gasoline	Gallons	371,979	1,199.9	247,999	185,990

⁶ CalEnviroScreen 4.0

Impacts on Regional Finances

The Youth Opportunity Pass is currently funded by SANDAG with temporary funding at a rate of approximately \$6.5 million per year to reimburse MTS and NCTD for lost fare revenue and ensure that each operating agency can continue running full scheduled service without creating new budget shortfalls. Of the reimbursement amount, MTS receives \$5.3 million per year and NCTD receives \$1.2 million per year. These reimbursement amounts were determined based on Fiscal Year 2019 fare revenue collected from sales of Youth fares, including one-way fares, day passes, monthly passes, 30-day passes, and any other Youth fare. Youth fares have been subsidized to the equivalent of a Senior/Disabled/Medicare fare since 2019, so prior to the Youth Opportunity Pass, youth riders paid \$1.25 for a one-way ride or \$3.00 for an all-day pass for most services and \$23 for a monthly pass.

According to the survey conducted, 79% of youth using the program plan to continue riding transit after they become adults. If youth riders follow through on this commitment to transit ridership, it could boost agency budgets and provide long-term financial viability as the young people using the Youth Opportunity Pass start paying for regular transit. SANDAG, MTS, and NCTD acknowledge that transit fares are an essential portion of agencies' operating budgets. Through our **Transit Fare Discount Study**, SANDAG is currently evaluating potential scenarios for a redesigned, more equitable fare structure, including the permanent implementation of the Youth Opportunity Pass. SANDAG is currently working with regional and state partners to identify a new funding source that will be able to sustain the program beyond a limited pilot timeframe.

Tradeoffs and Opportunities

With limited funding, budgeting is always an exercise in priorities and tradeoffs as not every project or program can be funded simultaneously. SANDAG intends to find a permanent funding source that will sustain the program for the long term while also considering other regional priorities, such as whether expanding free or discounted transit service is more valuable to riders than running additional bus service or keeping buses running later at night. Because of this, SANDAG is currently evaluating the potential impacts of various fare discount scenarios that could be proposed as part of the 2025 Regional Plan, such as the feasibility and necessity of an expanded Youth Opportunity Pass or additional fare discounts for low-income San Diegans, older or transitional youth through age 24, or other criteria. Each category of discounted ridership may make transit more affordable to more communities but must be balanced with the need to fully fund transit operations with fewer fare revenues. SANDAG will continue to work with MTS, NCTD, and our other regional, state, and federal partners to identify best practices and paths forward.

Throughout the program, SANDAG staff has met with staff from other transit agencies and planning organizations from around the state, as well as legislators and staff. Through these conversations, various future funding scenarios have been identified that could be used once temporary pilot funding for the program expires. A more detailed evaluation of fare replacement funding will be included in the Transit Fare Discount Study when finalized. The identified potential funding sources include prioritization of state or federal funding, new flexible transit operations funding, additional local funding (potentially via a future ballot measure), partnerships with schools, and partnerships with local jurisdictions. These and other options will continue to be evaluated.

Appendix A - Ridership

Transit	Category	Apr22 Count	May22 Count	May22 vs prior	May22 vs base	Jun22 count	Jun22 vs prior
MTS Bus	Total Rides	2,604,321	2,693,200	3.4%	3.4%	2,502,246	-7.1%
MTS Trolley	Total Rides	2,859,473	3,008,486	5.2%	5.2%	2,762,477	-8.2%
MTS Total	Total Rides	5,463,794	5,701,686	4.4%	4.4%	5,264,723	-7.7%
NCTD Bus	Total Rides	356,247	374,089	5.0%	5.0%	343,911	-8.1%
NCTD Coaster	Total Rides	60,758	66,762	9.9%	9.9%	74,069	10.9%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Rides	111,870	120,979	8.1%	8.1%	119,506	-1.2%
NCTD Total	Total Rides	528,875	561,830	6.2%	6.2%	537,486	-4.3%
MTS Bus	Total Youth Rides	258,822	311,521	20.4%	20.4%	275,008	-11.7%
MTS Trolley	Total Youth Rides	55,037	255,195	363.7%	363.7%	211,673	-17.1%
MTS Total	Total Youth Rides	313,859	566,716	80.6%	80.6%	486,681	-14.1%
NCTD Bus	Total Youth Rides	30,101	52,640	74.9%	74.9%	37,574	-28.6%
NCTD Coaster	Total Youth Rides	243	871	258.4%	258.4%	1,599	83.6%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Youth Rides	1,579	2,682	69.9%	69.9%	3,148	17.4%
NCTD Total	Total Youth Rides	31,923	56,193	76.0%	76.0%	42,321	-24.7%
MTS Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	11,257	13,479	19.7%	19.7%	11,272	-16.4%
MTS Trolley	Youth Weekday Avg	1,731	9,926	473.6%	473.6%	8,074	-18.7%
MTS Total	Youth Weekday Avg	12,988	23,405	80.2%	80.2%	19,346	-17.3%
NCTD Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	1,359	2,360	73.7%	73.7%	1,590	-32.6%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Weekday Avg	9	24	173.4%	173.4%	54	125.3%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Weekday Avg	53	72	35.4%	35.4%	90	25.8%
NCTD Total	Youth Weekday Avg	1,421	2,456	72.8%	72.8%	1,734	-29.4%
MTS Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	3,017	3,688	22.2%	22.2%	3,968	7.6%
MTS Trolley	Youth Saturday Avg	2,680	6,929	158.6%	158.6%	3,288	-52.6%
MTS Total	Youth Saturday Avg	5,696	10,617	86.4%	86.4%	7,255	-31.7%
NCTD Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	250	435	73.7%	73.7%	495	14.0%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Saturday Avg	4	30	645.0%	645.0%	48	60.2%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Saturday Avg	18	51	185.6%	185.6%	54	4.1%
NCTD Total	Youth Saturday Avg	272	516	89.5%	89.5%	597	15.6%
MTS Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	1,834	2,284	24.6%	24.6%	2,789	22.1%
MTS Trolley	Youth Sunday Avg	1,325	1,821	37.4%	37.4%	5,223	186.9%
MTS Total	Youth Sunday Avg	3,158	4,105	30.0%	30.0%	8,012	95.2%
NCTD Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	171	324	89.2%	89.2%	363	12.2%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Sunday Avg	4	40	836.5%	836.5%	35	-13.3%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Sunday Avg	14	45	216.7%	216.7%	49	8.5%
NCTD Total	Youth Sunday Avg	190	409	115.6%	115.6%	447	9.3%
MTS Bus	Total Unique Youth	9,293	16,021	72.4%	72.4%	19,567	22.1%
MTS Trolley	Total Unique Youth	4,405	7,957	80.6%	80.6%	9,296	16.8%
NCTD Bus	Total Unique Youth	1,835	3,355	82.8%	82.8%	3,980	18.6%
NCTD Coaster	Total Unique Youth	86	348	304.7%	304.7%	692	98.9%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Unique Youth	372	699	87.9%	87.9%	1,174	68.0%
NCTD Total	Total Unique Youth	1,985	3,772	90.0%	90.0%	4,844	28.4%

Appendix A - Ridership

Transit	Category	Jun22 vs base	Jul22 count	Jul22 vs prior	Jul22 vs base	Aug22 count	Aug22 vs prior
MTS Bus	Total Rides	-3.9%	2,444,313	-2.3%	-6.1%	2,711,921	10.9%
MTS Trolley	Total Rides	-3.4%	2,842,090	2.9%	-0.6%	2,977,043	4.7%
MTS Total	Total Rides	-3.6%	5,286,403	0.4%	-3.2%	5,688,964	7.6%
NCTD Bus	Total Rides	-3.5%	325,735	-5.3%	-8.6%	380,404	16.8%
NCTD Coaster	Total Rides	21.9%	89,589	21.0%	47.5%	79,796	-10.9%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Rides	6.8%	115,319	-3.5%	3.1%	117,761	2.1%
NCTD Total	Total Rides	1.6%	530,643	-1.3%	0.3%	577,961	8.9%
MTS Bus	Total Youth Rides	6.3%	257,969	-6.2%	-0.3%	370,168	43.5%
MTS Trolley	Total Youth Rides	284.6%	200,631	-5.2%	264.5%	254,424	26.8%
MTS Total	Total Youth Rides	55.1%	458,600	-5.8%	46.1%	624,592	36.2%
NCTD Bus	Total Youth Rides	24.8%	26,304	-30.0%	-12.6%	57,593	119.0%
NCTD Coaster	Total Youth Rides	558.0%	1,954	22.2%	704.1%	1,405	-28.1%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Youth Rides	99.4%	2,874	-8.7%	82.0%	3,115	8.4%
NCTD Total	Total Youth Rides	32.6%	31,132	-26.4%	-2.5%	62,113	99.5%
MTS Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	0.1%	10,704	-5.0%	-4.9%	14,488	35.4%
MTS Trolley	Youth Weekday Avg	366.6%	8,128	0.7%	369.7%	10,459	28.7%
MTS Total	Youth Weekday Avg	49.0%	18,832	-2.7%	45.0%	24,947	32.5%
NCTD Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	17.0%	1,101	-30.8%	-19.0%	2,315	110.4%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Weekday Avg	515.8%	71	32.3%	714.9%	45	-36.5%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Weekday Avg	70.3%	80	-10.6%	52.3%	112	38.7%
NCTD Total	Youth Weekday Avg	22.0%	1,252	-27.8%	-11.8%	2,472	97.4%
MTS Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	31.5%	4,744	19.6%	57.3%	5,474	15.4%
MTS Trolley	Youth Saturday Avg	22.7%	2,611	-20.6%	-2.6%	1,362	-47.8%
MTS Total	Youth Saturday Avg	27.4%	7,355	1.4%	29.1%	6,836	-7.1%
NCTD Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	97.9%	507	2.4%	102.6%	635	25.2%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Saturday Avg	1093.8%	48	0.5%	1100.0%	38	-20.3%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Saturday Avg	197.2%	51	-5.0%	182.4%	57	12.1%
NCTD Total	Youth Saturday Avg	119.1%	606	1.6%	122.6%	730	20.5%
MTS Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	52.1%	3,362	20.5%	83.3%	3,761	11.9%
MTS Trolley	Youth Sunday Avg	294.3%	4,169	-20.2%	214.7%	2,107	-49.5%
MTS Total	Youth Sunday Avg	153.7%	7,531	-6.0%	138.4%	5,868	-22.1%
NCTD Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	112.3%	412	13.4%	140.7%	497	20.6%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Sunday Avg	711.8%	41	18.3%	860.0%	40	-2.6%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Sunday Avg	243.6%	37	-24.5%	159.5%	47	25.7%
NCTD Total	Youth Sunday Avg	135.6%	490	9.6%	158.3%	583	19.1%
MTS Bus	Total Unique Youth	110.6%	19,154	-2.1%	106.1%	23,815	24.3%
MTS Trolley	Total Unique Youth	111.0%	9,997	7.5%	126.9%	11,102	11.1%
NCTD Bus	Total Unique Youth	116.9%	3,133	-21.3%	70.7%	5,244	67.4%
NCTD Coaster	Total Unique Youth	704.7%	841	21.5%	877.9%	615	-26.9%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Unique Youth	215.6%	1,015	-13.5%	172.8%	994	-2.1%
NCTD Total	Total Unique Youth	144.0%	4,067	-16.0%	104.9%	5,995	47.4%

Appendix A - Ridership

Transit	Category	Aug22 vs base	Sep22 count	Sep22 vs prior	Sep22 vs base	Oct22 count	Oct22 vs prior
MTS Bus	Total Rides	4.1%	2,823,907	4.1%	8.4%	3,201,149	13.4%
MTS Trolley	Total Rides	4.1%	3,030,848	1.8%	6.0%	3,252,262	7.3%
MTS Total	Total Rides	4.1%	5,854,755	2.9%	7.2%	6,453,411	10.2%
NCTD Bus	Total Rides	6.8%	411,187	8.1%	15.4%	431,978	5.1%
NCTD Coaster	Total Rides	31.3%	69,054	-13.5%	13.7%	64,532	-6.5%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Rides	5.3%	122,078	3.7%	9.1%	116,702	-4.4%
NCTD Total	Total Rides	9.3%	602,319	4.2%	13.9%	613,212	1.8%
MTS Bus	Total Youth Rides	43.0%	432,681	16.9%	67.2%	494,561	14.3%
MTS Trolley	Total Youth Rides	362.3%	371,011	45.8%	574.1%	289,076	-22.1%
MTS Total	Total Youth Rides	99.0%	803,692	28.7%	156.1%	783,637	-2.5%
NCTD Bus	Total Youth Rides	91.3%	79,844	38.6%	165.3%	80,412	0.7%
NCTD Coaster	Total Youth Rides	478.2%	1,396	-0.6%	474.5%	1,407	0.8%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Youth Rides	97.3%	3,763	20.8%	138.3%	3,209	-14.7%
NCTD Total	Total Youth Rides	94.6%	85,003	36.9%	166.3%	85,028	0.0%
MTS Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	28.7%	18,584	28.3%	65.1%	20,965	12.8%
MTS Trolley	Youth Weekday Avg	504.4%	16,105	54.0%	830.6%	12,122	-24.7%
MTS Total	Youth Weekday Avg	92.1%	34,689	39.1%	167.1%	33,087	-4.6%
NCTD Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	70.3%	3,564	53.9%	162.2%	3,524	-1.1%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Weekday Avg	417.1%	44	-2.4%	404.9%	51	14.3%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Weekday Avg	111.3%	159	42.8%	201.7%	133	-16.6%
NCTD Total	Youth Weekday Avg	74.0%	3,767	52.4%	165.2%	3,707	-1.6%
MTS Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	81.5%	5,674	3.7%	88.1%	6,505	14.6%
MTS Trolley	Youth Saturday Avg	-49.2%	1,786	31.1%	-33.3%	4,707	163.5%
MTS Total	Youth Saturday Avg	20.0%	7,460	9.1%	31.0%	11,212	50.3%
NCTD Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	153.7%	634	-0.1%	153.4%	767	21.0%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Saturday Avg	856.3%	41	6.1%	915.0%	51	24.8%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Saturday Avg	216.7%	48	-15.1%	168.9%	50	3.7%
NCTD Total	Youth Saturday Avg	168.2%	723	-1.0%	165.6%	868	20.1%
MTS Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	105.1%	3,942	4.8%	115.0%	4,356	10.5%
MTS Trolley	Youth Sunday Avg	59.1%	5,132	143.6%	287.5%	2,194	-57.3%
MTS Total	Youth Sunday Avg	85.8%	9,075	54.6%	187.3%	6,550	-27.8%
NCTD Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	190.4%	487	-1.9%	184.9%	531	9.1%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Sunday Avg	835.3%	37	-7.5%	764.7%	38	4.3%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Sunday Avg	226.2%	44	-6.4%	205.2%	34	-23.2%
NCTD Total	Youth Sunday Avg	207.5%	568	-2.6%	199.5%	603	6.3%
MTS Bus	Total Unique Youth	156.3%	26,321	10.5%	183.2%	28,313	7.6%
MTS Trolley	Total Unique Youth	152.0%	11,754	5.9%	166.8%	12,348	5.1%
NCTD Bus	Total Unique Youth	185.8%	5,469	4.3%	198.0%	5,719	4.6%
NCTD Coaster	Total Unique Youth	615.1%	557	-9.4%	547.7%	554	-0.5%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Unique Youth	167.2%	812	-18.3%	118.3%	746	-8.1%
NCTD Total	Total Unique Youth	202.0%	6,104	1.8%	207.5%	6,363	4.2%

Appendix A - Ridership

Transit	Category	Oct22 vs base	Nov22 count	Nov22 vs prior	Nov22 vs base	Dec22 count	Dec22 vs prior
MTS Bus	Total Rides	22.9%	2,810,775	-12.2%	7.9%	2,479,821	-11.8%
MTS Trolley	Total Rides	13.7%	2,923,867	-10.1%	2.3%	2,760,489	-5.6%
MTS Total	Total Rides	18.1%	5,734,642	-11.1%	5.0%	5,240,310	-8.6%
NCTD Bus	Total Rides	21.3%	377,875	-12.5%	6.1%	348,460	-7.8%
NCTD Coaster	Total Rides	6.2%	57,435	-11.0%	-5.5%	54,644	-4.9%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Rides	4.3%	114,494	-1.9%	2.3%	95,388	-16.7%
NCTD Total	Total Rides	15.9%	549,804	-10.3%	4.0%	498,492	-9.3%
MTS Bus	Total Youth Rides	91.1%	420,957	-14.9%	62.6%	363,806	-13.6%
MTS Trolley	Total Youth Rides	425.2%	298,482	3.3%	442.3%	254,974	-14.6%
MTS Total	Total Youth Rides	149.7%	719,439	-8.2%	129.2%	618,780	-14.0%
NCTD Bus	Total Youth Rides	167.1%	65,019	-19.1%	116.0%	60,962	-6.2%
NCTD Coaster	Total Youth Rides	479.0%	1,304	-7.3%	436.6%	1,205	-7.6%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Youth Rides	103.2%	2,817	-12.2%	78.4%	2,399	-14.8%
NCTD Total	Total Youth Rides	166.4%	69,140	-18.7%	116.6%	64,566	-6.6%
MTS Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	86.2%	17,971	-14.3%	59.6%	15,178	-15.5%
MTS Trolley	Youth Weekday Avg	600.5%	12,671	4.5%	632.2%	9,500	-25.0%
MTS Total	Youth Weekday Avg	154.8%	30,642	-7.4%	135.9%	24,678	-19.5%
NCTD Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	159.2%	2,857	-18.9%	110.2%	2,577	-9.8%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Weekday Avg	477.2%	42	-16.7%	381.0%	41	-2.1%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Weekday Avg	151.6%	112	-16.1%	111.2%	83	-25.5%
NCTD Total	Youth Weekday Avg	160.9%	3,011	-18.8%	111.9%	2,702	-10.3%
MTS Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	115.6%	6,081	-6.5%	101.6%	5,363	-11.8%
MTS Trolley	Youth Saturday Avg	75.6%	2,959	-37.1%	10.4%	4,103	38.7%
MTS Total	Youth Saturday Avg	96.8%	9,040	-19.4%	58.7%	9,466	4.7%
NCTD Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	206.7%	715	-6.9%	185.7%	625	-12.6%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Saturday Avg	1166.7%	44	-13.7%	993.8%	27	-37.4%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Saturday Avg	178.9%	46	-9.4%	152.8%	34	-24.8%
NCTD Total	Youth Saturday Avg	219.0%	804	-7.4%	195.4%	686	-14.7%
MTS Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	137.6%	3,849	-11.7%	109.9%	3,223	-16.3%
MTS Trolley	Youth Sunday Avg	65.6%	4,109	87.3%	210.2%	6,991	70.1%
MTS Total	Youth Sunday Avg	107.4%	7,958	21.5%	152.0%	10,213	28.3%
NCTD Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	210.8%	476	-10.4%	178.5%	388	-18.5%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Sunday Avg	802.0%	34	-10.8%	704.7%	18	-48.8%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Sunday Avg	134.4%	29	-14.3%	100.9%	19	-34.0%
NCTD Total	Youth Sunday Avg	218.2%	539	-10.6%	184.4%	425	-21.2%
MTS Bus	Total Unique Youth	204.7%	28,101	-0.7%	202.4%	28,103	0.0%
MTS Trolley	Total Unique Youth	180.3%	11,679	-5.4%	165.1%	10,731	-8.1%
NCTD Bus	Total Unique Youth	211.7%	5,652	-1.2%	208.0%	5,637	-0.3%
NCTD Coaster	Total Unique Youth	544.2%	513	-7.4%	496.5%	524	2.1%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Unique Youth	100.5%	821	10.1%	120.7%	865	5.4%
NCTD Total	Total Unique Youth	220.6%	6,307	-0.9%	217.7%	6,258	-0.8%

Appendix A - Ridership

Transit	Category	Dec22 vs base	Jan23 count	Jan23 vs prior	Jan23 vs base	Feb23 count	Feb23 vs prior
MTS Bus	Total Rides	-4.8%	2,701,010	8.9%	3.7%	2,737,097	1.3%
MTS Trolley	Total Rides	-3.5%	2,879,853	4.3%	0.7%	2,813,615	-2.3%
MTS Total	Total Rides	-4.1%	5,580,863	6.5%	2.1%	5,550,712	-0.5%
NCTD Bus	Total Rides	-2.2%	344,762	-1.1%	-3.2%	350,962	1.8%
NCTD Coaster	Total Rides	-10.1%	46,679	-14.6%	-23.2%	54,157	16.0%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Rides	-14.7%	98,414	3.2%	-12.0%	95,603	-2.9%
NCTD Total	Total Rides	-5.7%	489,855	-1.7%	-7.4%	500,722	2.2%
MTS Bus	Total Youth Rides	40.6%	428,958	17.9%	65.7%	466,549	8.8%
MTS Trolley	Total Youth Rides	363.3%	304,065	19.3%	452.5%	256,925	-15.5%
MTS Total	Total Youth Rides	97.2%	733,023	18.5%	133.6%	723,474	-1.3%
NCTD Bus	Total Youth Rides	102.5%	62,497	2.5%	107.6%	71,603	14.6%
NCTD Coaster	Total Youth Rides	395.9%	1,098	-8.9%	351.9%	1,106	0.7%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Youth Rides	51.9%	2,405	0.3%	52.3%	3,179	32.2%
NCTD Total	Total Youth Rides	102.3%	66,000	2.2%	106.7%	75,888	15.0%
MTS Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	34.8%	18,129	19.4%	61.0%	21,835	20.4%
MTS Trolley	Youth Weekday Avg	449.0%	11,924	25.5%	589.0%	11,086	-7.0%
MTS Total	Youth Weekday Avg	90.0%	30,053	21.8%	131.4%	32,921	9.5%
NCTD Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	89.6%	2,652	2.9%	95.1%	3,398	28.1%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Weekday Avg	371.0%	35	-14.9%	301.0%	36	1.7%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Weekday Avg	57.4%	66	-20.9%	24.5%	99	50.5%
NCTD Total	Youth Weekday Avg	90.2%	2,753	1.9%	93.8%	3,532	28.3%
MTS Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	77.8%	5,828	8.7%	93.2%	6,697	14.9%
MTS Trolley	Youth Saturday Avg	53.1%	6,858	67.2%	155.9%	7,505	9.4%
MTS Total	Youth Saturday Avg	66.2%	12,687	34.0%	122.7%	14,202	11.9%
NCTD Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	149.6%	672	7.6%	168.7%	554	-17.6%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Saturday Avg	585.0%	51	84.3%	1162.5%	35	-30.7%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Saturday Avg	90.0%	38	11.1%	111.1%	44	14.5%
NCTD Total	Youth Saturday Avg	152.1%	761	10.9%	179.5%	633	-16.9%
MTS Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	75.7%	3,822	18.6%	108.4%	4,551	19.1%
MTS Trolley	Youth Sunday Avg	427.8%	3,875	-44.6%	192.5%	2,189	-43.5%
MTS Total	Youth Sunday Avg	223.4%	7,696	-24.6%	143.7%	6,740	-12.4%
NCTD Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	127.0%	445	14.5%	160.0%	612	37.7%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Sunday Avg	311.8%	34	96.2%	707.8%	33	-3.9%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Sunday Avg	32.6%	34	76.8%	134.4%	33	-1.0%
NCTD Total	Youth Sunday Avg	124.0%	513	20.7%	170.3%	679	32.4%
MTS Bus	Total Unique Youth	202.4%	28,713	2.2%	209.0%	29,917	4.2%
MTS Trolley	Total Unique Youth	143.6%	11,068	3.1%	151.3%	11,061	-0.1%
NCTD Bus	Total Unique Youth	207.2%	5,621	-0.3%	206.3%	5,871	4.4%
NCTD Coaster	Total Unique Youth	509.3%	448	-14.5%	420.9%	427	-4.7%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Unique Youth	132.5%	882	2.0%	137.1%	950	7.7%
NCTD Total	Total Unique Youth	215.3%	6,170	-1.4%	210.8%	6,433	4.3%

Appendix A - Ridership

Transit	Category	Feb23 vs base	Mar23 count	Mar23 vs prior	Mar23 vs base	Apr23 count	Apr23 vs prior
MTS Bus	Total Rides	5.1%	2,856,194	4.4%	9.7%	2,955,225	3.5%
MTS Trolley	Total Rides	-1.6%	3,114,372	10.7%	8.9%	3,146,989	1.0%
MTS Total	Total Rides	1.6%	5,970,566	7.6%	9.3%	6,102,214	2.2%
NCTD Bus	Total Rides	-1.5%	384,719	9.6%	8.0%	386,876	0.6%
NCTD Coaster	Total Rides	-10.9%	56,204	3.8%	-7.5%	71,921	28.0%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Rides	-14.5%	86,572	-9.4%	-22.6%	105,997	22.4%
NCTD Total	Total Rides	-5.3%	527,495	5.3%	-0.3%	564,794	7.1%
MTS Bus	Total Youth Rides	80.3%	460,745	-1.2%	78.0%	512,874	11.3%
MTS Trolley	Total Youth Rides	366.8%	292,328	13.8%	431.1%	324,738	11.1%
MTS Total	Total Youth Rides	130.5%	753,073	4.1%	139.9%	837,612	11.2%
NCTD Bus	Total Youth Rides	137.9%	78,474	9.6%	160.7%	75,711	-3.5%
NCTD Coaster	Total Youth Rides	355.1%	1,261	14.0%	418.9%	1,308	3.7%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Youth Rides	101.3%	3,480	9.5%	120.4%	4,641	33.4%
NCTD Total	Total Youth Rides	137.7%	83,215	9.7%	160.7%	81,660	-1.9%
MTS Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	94.0%	18,027	-17.4%	60.1%	22,441	24.5%
MTS Trolley	Youth Weekday Avg	540.6%	11,117	0.3%	542.4%	13,917	25.2%
MTS Total	Youth Weekday Avg	153.5%	29,144	-11.5%	124.4%	36,358	24.8%
NCTD Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	150.0%	3,201	-5.8%	135.5%	3,515	9.8%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Weekday Avg	308.0%	41	15.1%	369.4%	40	-1.9%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Weekday Avg	87.4%	88	-11.3%	66.1%	100	13.7%
NCTD Total	Youth Weekday Avg	148.6%	3,330	-5.7%	134.4%	3,655	9.8%
MTS Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	122.0%	6,917	3.3%	129.3%	7,993	15.6%
MTS Trolley	Youth Saturday Avg	180.1%	2,447	-67.4%	-8.7%	6,760	176.3%
MTS Total	Youth Saturday Avg	149.3%	9,363	-34.1%	64.4%	14,753	57.6%
NCTD Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	121.4%	923	66.5%	268.7%	924	0.2%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Saturday Avg	775.0%	50	42.9%	1150.0%	44	-12.0%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Saturday Avg	141.7%	46	5.2%	154.2%	51	11.5%
NCTD Total	Youth Saturday Avg	132.4%	1,018	61.0%	274.1%	1,019	0.1%
MTS Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	148.2%	4,616	1.4%	151.7%	4,818	4.4%
MTS Trolley	Youth Sunday Avg	65.3%	6,712	206.6%	406.7%	2,519	-62.5%
MTS Total	Youth Sunday Avg	113.4%	11,327	68.1%	258.6%	7,337	-35.2%
NCTD Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	258.0%	605	-1.2%	253.8%	610	0.8%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Sunday Avg	676.5%	41	22.7%	852.9%	34	-16.5%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Sunday Avg	132.0%	37	10.5%	156.4%	48	30.1%
NCTD Total	Youth Sunday Avg	257.9%	682	0.6%	259.9%	691	1.3%
MTS Bus	Total Unique Youth	221.9%	30,547	2.1%	228.7%	32,337	5.9%
MTS Trolley	Total Unique Youth	151.1%	11,541	4.3%	162.0%	12,587	9.1%
NCTD Bus	Total Unique Youth	219.9%	6,046	3.0%	229.5%	6,124	1.3%
NCTD Coaster	Total Unique Youth	396.5%	526	23.2%	511.6%	631	20.0%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Unique Youth	155.4%	1,103	16.1%	196.5%	1,436	30.2%
NCTD Total	Total Unique Youth	224.1%	6,729	4.6%	239.0%	6,971	3.6%

Appendix A - Ridership

Transit	Category	Apr23 vs base	May23 count	May23 vs prior	May23 vs base	Jun23 count	Jun23 vs prior
MTS Bus	Total Rides	13.5%	2,616,232	-11.5%	0.5%	1,876,697	-28.3%
MTS Trolley	Total Rides	10.1%	3,226,092	2.5%	12.8%	3,078,785	-4.6%
MTS Total	Total Rides	11.7%	5,842,324	-4.3%	6.9%	4,955,482	-15.2%
NCTD Bus	Total Rides	8.6%	425,563	10.0%	19.5%	372,969	-12.4%
NCTD Coaster	Total Rides	18.4%	74,711	3.9%	23.0%	94,485	26.5%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Rides	-5.2%	110,127	3.9%	-1.6%	97,598	-11.4%
NCTD Total	Total Rides	6.8%	610,401	8.1%	15.4%	565,052	-7.4%
MTS Bus	Total Youth Rides	98.2%	445,186	-13.2%	72.0%	222,397	-50.0%
MTS Trolley	Total Youth Rides	490.0%	312,334	-3.8%	467.5%	223,976	-28.3%
MTS Total	Total Youth Rides	166.9%	757,520	-9.6%	141.4%	446,373	-41.1%
NCTD Bus	Total Youth Rides	151.5%	94,933	25.4%	215.4%	53,848	-43.3%
NCTD Coaster	Total Youth Rides	438.3%	1,170	-10.6%	381.5%	1,944	66.2%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Youth Rides	193.9%	4,432	-4.5%	180.7%	3,808	-14.1%
NCTD Total	Total Youth Rides	155.8%	100,535	23.1%	214.9%	59,600	-40.7%
MTS Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	99.3%	18,338	-18.3%	62.9%	9,007	-50.9%
MTS Trolley	Youth Weekday Avg	704.2%	12,589	-9.5%	627.5%	8,818	-30.0%
MTS Total	Youth Weekday Avg	179.9%	30,927	-14.9%	138.1%	17,825	-42.4%
NCTD Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	158.6%	4,080	16.1%	200.2%	2,265	-44.5%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Weekday Avg	360.5%	30	-26.2%	239.8%	62	109.8%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Weekday Avg	88.9%	82	-17.4%	56.0%	76	-7.2%
NCTD Total	Youth Weekday Avg	157.3%	4,193	14.7%	195.1%	2,404	-42.7%
MTS Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	165.0%	5,960	-25.4%	97.6%	3,666	-38.5%
MTS Trolley	Youth Saturday Avg	152.3%	4,037	-40.3%	50.6%	5,117	26.8%
MTS Total	Youth Saturday Avg	159.0%	9,997	-32.2%	75.5%	8,782	-12.1%
NCTD Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	269.5%	979	5.9%	291.4%	847	-13.5%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Saturday Avg	1000.0%	48	8.6%	1095.0%	47	-1.7%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Saturday Avg	183.3%	38	-25.5%	111.1%	54	42.1%
NCTD Total	Youth Saturday Avg	274.5%	1,065	4.5%	291.3%	948	-11.0%
MTS Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	162.7%	3,582	-25.7%	95.3%	2,394	-33.2%
MTS Trolley	Youth Sunday Avg	90.2%	3,847	52.7%	190.4%	2,381	-38.1%
MTS Total	Youth Sunday Avg	132.3%	7,428	1.2%	135.2%	4,775	-35.7%
NCTD Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	256.6%	673	10.4%	293.6%	659	-2.1%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Sunday Avg	695.3%	28	-18.6%	547.1%	37	34.5%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Sunday Avg	233.5%	43	-10.6%	198.3%	37	-13.5%
NCTD Total	Youth Sunday Avg	264.7%	743	7.5%	292.0%	733	-1.4%
MTS Bus	Total Unique Youth	248.0%	30,243	-6.5%	225.4%	22,373	-26.0%
MTS Trolley	Total Unique Youth	185.7%	11,671	-7.3%	164.9%	11,486	-1.6%
NCTD Bus	Total Unique Youth	233.7%	6,194	1.1%	237.5%	5,993	-3.2%
NCTD Coaster	Total Unique Youth	633.7%	487	-22.8%	466.3%	963	97.7%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Unique Youth	286.0%	1,356	-5.6%	264.5%	1,475	8.8%
NCTD Total	Total Unique Youth	251.2%	6,881	-1.3%	246.6%	7,084	3.0%

Appendix A - Ridership

Transit	Category	Jun23 vs base	Jul23 count	Jul23 vs prior	Jul23 vs base	Aug23 count	Aug23 vs prior
MTS Bus	Total Rides	-27.9%	2,446,630	30.4%	-6.1%	2,801,049	14.5%
MTS Trolley	Total Rides	7.7%	3,112,741	1.1%	8.9%	3,277,448	5.3%
MTS Total	Total Rides	-9.3%	5,559,371	12.2%	1.7%	6,078,497	9.3%
NCTD Bus	Total Rides	4.7%	345,614	-7.3%	-3.0%	398,979	15.4%
NCTD Coaster	Total Rides	55.5%	103,286	9.3%	70.0%	85,690	-17.0%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Rides	-12.8%	87,225	-10.6%	-22.0%	97,190	11.4%
NCTD Total	Total Rides	6.8%	536,125	-5.1%	1.4%	581,859	8.5%
MTS Bus	Total Youth Rides	-14.1%	332,619	49.6%	28.5%	476,488	43.3%
MTS Trolley	Total Youth Rides	307.0%	225,831	0.8%	310.3%	254,993	12.9%
MTS Total	Total Youth Rides	42.2%	558,450	25.1%	77.9%	731,481	31.0%
NCTD Bus	Total Youth Rides	78.9%	37,385	-30.6%	24.2%	71,161	90.3%
NCTD Coaster	Total Youth Rides	700.0%	2,218	14.1%	812.8%	1,451	-34.6%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Youth Rides	141.2%	3,261	-14.4%	106.5%	4,600	41.1%
NCTD Total	Total Youth Rides	86.7%	42,864	-28.1%	34.3%	77,212	80.1%
MTS Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	-20.0%	13,738	52.5%	22.0%	18,739	36.4%
MTS Trolley	Youth Weekday Avg	409.5%	9,359	6.1%	440.8%	9,962	6.4%
MTS Total	Youth Weekday Avg	37.2%	23,098	29.6%	77.8%	28,702	24.3%
NCTD Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	66.6%	1,535	-32.2%	13.0%	2,933	91.0%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Weekday Avg	612.8%	68	9.1%	677.8%	43	-37.4%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Weekday Avg	44.8%	77	1.2%	46.6%	101	30.7%
NCTD Total	Youth Weekday Avg	69.2%	1,681	-30.1%	18.3%	3,077	83.1%
MTS Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	21.5%	6,326	72.6%	109.7%	7,131	12.7%
MTS Trolley	Youth Saturday Avg	90.9%	2,833	-44.6%	5.7%	5,289	86.7%
MTS Total	Youth Saturday Avg	54.2%	9,159	4.3%	60.8%	12,420	35.6%
NCTD Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	238.4%	804	-5.0%	221.3%	883	9.8%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Saturday Avg	1075.0%	65	37.2%	1512.5%	43	-33.3%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Saturday Avg	200.0%	40	-26.2%	121.3%	46	15.5%
NCTD Total	Youth Saturday Avg	248.2%	908	-4.2%	233.7%	972	7.0%
MTS Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	30.6%	4,370	82.5%	138.3%	4,241	-3.0%
MTS Trolley	Youth Sunday Avg	79.7%	4,080	71.4%	208.0%	1,176	-71.2%
MTS Total	Youth Sunday Avg	51.2%	8,450	77.0%	167.5%	5,417	-35.9%
NCTD Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	285.4%	680	3.1%	297.4%	581	-14.5%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Sunday Avg	770.6%	48	30.8%	1038.8%	28	-43.2%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Sunday Avg	158.1%	31	-16.8%	114.9%	29	-5.0%
NCTD Total	Youth Sunday Avg	286.6%	759	3.5%	300.2%	638	-16.0%
MTS Bus	Total Unique Youth	140.8%	27,345	22.2%	194.3%	32,973	20.6%
MTS Trolley	Total Unique Youth	160.7%	12,647	10.1%	187.1%	14,068	11.2%
NCTD Bus	Total Unique Youth	226.6%	4,377	-27.0%	138.5%	6,694	52.9%
NCTD Coaster	Total Unique Youth	1019.8%	1,018	5.7%	1083.7%	688	-32.4%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Unique Youth	296.5%	1,311	-11.1%	252.4%	1,522	16.1%
NCTD Total	Total Unique Youth	256.9%	5,528	-22.0%	178.5%	7,566	36.9%

Appendix A - Ridership

Transit	Category	Aug23 vs base
MTS Bus	Total Rides	7.6%
MTS Trolley	Total Rides	14.6%
MTS Total	Total Rides	11.3%
NCTD Bus	Total Rides	12.0%
NCTD Coaster	Total Rides	41.0%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Rides	-13.1%
NCTD Total	Total Rides	10.0%
MTS Bus	Total Youth Rides	84.1%
MTS Trolley	Total Youth Rides	363.3%
MTS Total	Total Youth Rides	133.1%
NCTD Bus	Total Youth Rides	136.4%
NCTD Coaster	Total Youth Rides	497.1%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Youth Rides	191.3%
NCTD Total	Total Youth Rides	141.9%
MTS Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	66.5%
MTS Trolley	Youth Weekday Avg	475.7%
MTS Total	Youth Weekday Avg	121.0%
NCTD Bus	Youth Weekday Avg	115.8%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Weekday Avg	387.3%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Weekday Avg	91.5%
NCTD Total	Youth Weekday Avg	116.6%
MTS Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	136.4%
MTS Trolley	Youth Saturday Avg	97.4%
MTS Total	Youth Saturday Avg	118.0%
NCTD Bus	Youth Saturday Avg	252.7%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Saturday Avg	975.0%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Saturday Avg	155.6%
NCTD Total	Youth Saturday Avg	256.9%
MTS Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	131.3%
MTS Trolley	Youth Sunday Avg	-11.2%
MTS Total	Youth Sunday Avg	71.5%
NCTD Bus	Youth Sunday Avg	239.8%
NCTD Coaster	Youth Sunday Avg	547.1%
NCTD Sprinter	Youth Sunday Avg	104.1%
NCTD Total	Youth Sunday Avg	236.4%
MTS Bus	Total Unique Youth	254.8%
MTS Trolley	Total Unique Youth	219.4%
NCTD Bus	Total Unique Youth	264.8%
NCTD Coaster	Total Unique Youth	700.0%
NCTD Sprinter	Total Unique Youth	309.1%
NCTD Total	Total Unique Youth	281.2%

Attendance Rates

School Name	Percentage of Students Present		
	2018-2019 School Year	2021-2022 School Year	2022-2023 School Year
Adams Elementary	94.51	87.72	90.67
ALBA	79.56	71.09	74.13
Alcott Elementary	95.09	90.29	95.45
Angier Elementary	95.43	88.62	91.09
Audubon K-8	94.12	87.05	89.50
Baker Elementary	92.83	85.58	89.81
Balboa Elementary	93.54	85.18	90.25
Barnard Elementary	95.21	94.01	94.41
Bay Park Elementary	95.18	92.85	93.77
Bell Middle	94.86	88.57	90.83
Benchley/Weinberger Elementary	96.72	93.91	94.05
Bethune K-8	96.34	91.24	93.13
Bird Rock Elementary	96.16	94.32	94.20
Birney Elementary	96.60	92.90	94.56
Boone Elementary	95.46	86.48	89.25
Burbank Elementary	92.49	85.96	88.51
Cabrillo Elementary	95.01	88.86	91.04
Cadman Elementary	95.99	91.27	91.89
Canyon Hills High	96.87	93.44	93.88
Carson Elementary	95.94	86.09	90.86
Carver Elementary	91.67	85.39	88.25
Central Elementary	94.34	84.79	89.14
Challenger Middle	97.12	93.89	95.07
Chavez Elementary	93.29	83.64	88.75
Cherokee Point Elementary	93.16	86.60	89.77
Chesterton Elementary	96.52	90.96	94.26
Chollas/Mead Elementary	94.36	86.31	88.36
Clairemont Canyons Academy	93.75	86.81	88.35
Clairemont High	95.09	92.47	91.99
Clark Middle	95.03	90.10	90.57
Clay Elementary	93.93	88.00	89.32
Correia Middle	94.57	91.31	95.29
Crawford High	94.47	90.05	91.78
Creative Performing and Med Arts	95.09	89.70	91.30
Crown Point Elementary	94.11	89.50	91.51
Cubberley Elementary	94.78	90.01	92.22
Curie Elementary	96.27	94.11	94.30
Dailard Elementary	96.15	93.62	93.82
Dana Middle	95.14	92.54	94.85
De Portola Middle	96.71	93.48	94.75
Dewey Elementary	95.18	87.80	92.22
Dingeman Elementary	96.61	95.46	95.03
Doyle Elementary	95.87	92.66	92.82
East Village Middle College HS	97.19	94.48	96.95
Edison Elementary	94.71	90.75	91.37
Emerson Elementary	93.16	84.92	88.44
Encanto Elementary	93.20	83.98	88.33
Ericson Elementary	95.69	92.27	93.01

Attendance Rates

School Name	Percentage of Students Present		
	2018-2019 School Year	2021-2022 School Year	2022-2023 School Year
Euclid Elementary	93.92	85.67	90.86
Farb Middle	96.60	91.71	93.70
Fay Elementary	94.80	87.04	91.71
Field Elementary	94.58	90.97	91.01
Fletcher Elementary	93.90	84.27	88.86
Florence Elementary	94.82	88.77	91.48
Foster Elementary	95.04	90.61	90.82
Franklin Elementary	95.32	90.34	91.80
Freese Elementary	93.97	87.24	90.87
Fulton K-8	93.38	84.67	90.13
Gage Elementary	95.47	91.83	93.15
Garfield Elementary	93.96	87.56	89.73
Garfield High	98.93	98.56	93.76
Golden Hill K-8	93.84	89.50	91.07
Grant K-8	95.85	91.08	92.99
Green Elementary	95.84	92.44	93.29
Hage Elementary	95.50	90.95	91.73
Hamilton Elementary	92.86	90.50	91.24
Hancock Elementary	96.12	91.20	92.94
Hardy Elementary	96.17	91.35	92.18
Hawthorne Elementary	94.97	88.92	91.78
Hearst Elementary	96.70	93.85	93.82
Henry High	96.80	93.78	93.94
Hickman Elementary	96.27	92.57	92.90
Holmes Elementary	96.25	93.79	94.45
Home & Hosp/Transition Support	83.52	66.41	65.85
Hoover High	94.83	89.96	90.89
Horton Elementary	93.44	83.50	87.83
Ibarra Elementary	94.64	85.06	89.37
iHigh Virtual Academy	2.98	88.18	94.63
Innovation Middle	94.98	91.29	92.62
Jefferson Elementary	95.57	91.90	93.31
Jerabek Elementary	96.93	94.51	94.75
Johnson Elementary	93.59	87.92	89.58
Jonas Salk Elementary	96.80	94.28	93.90
Jones Elementary	95.39	90.77	92.08
Joyner Elementary	92.51	84.44	89.04
Juarez Elementary	94.75	89.65	91.66
Kearny Biomedical Sci & Tech	96.39	93.24	95.58
Kearny College Connections	97.29	94.78	96.65
Kearny Digital Media & Design	97.06	93.89	95.59
Kearny Eng, Innov & Design	97.13	93.88	96.06
Kimbrough Elementary	92.98	87.32	88.64
Knox Middle	93.66	87.14	90.34
Kumeyaay Elementary	96.07	92.65	92.27
La Jolla Elementary	95.58	93.50	93.91
La Jolla High	96.37	94.47	94.71

Attendance Rates

School Name	Percentage of Students Present		
	2018-2019 School Year	2021-2022 School Year	2022-2023 School Year
Lafayette Elementary	93.06	88.89	90.62
Language Academy	95.29	91.56	92.95
Lewis Middle	96.26	93.39	94.62
Lincoln High	92.42	86.53	89.02
Linda Vista Elementary	95.08	87.56	89.92
Logan K-8	94.78	NULL	NULL
Logan Memorial Ed Campus	NULL	86.14	90.28
Loma Portal Elementary	95.04	91.34	92.63
Longfellow K-8	95.56	92.58	93.58
Madison High	94.70	92.28	93.20
Mann Middle	95.57	86.32	89.89
Marshall Elementary	93.58	86.98	88.20
Marshall Middle	97.14	95.68	95.71
Marston Middle	95.87	92.52	93.07
Marvin Elementary	95.87	93.04	93.23
Mason Elementary	95.61	90.21	91.48
McKinley Elementary	96.00	92.68	92.97
Memorial Scholars & Athletes	93.18	NULL	NULL
Millennial Tech Middle	93.57	83.91	89.36
Miller Elementary	95.47	90.61	92.83
Mira Mesa High	97.20	92.95	94.99
Miramar Ranch Elementary	96.22	94.71	93.63
Mission Bay High	95.89	92.03	93.03
Montgomery Middle	96.48	90.65	92.43
Morse High	96.08	92.16	93.26
Mountain View School	NULL	85.76	89.32
Mt. Everest Academy	0.00	29.87	29.60
Muir UTK-8	94.20	90.43	93.21
Muirlands Middle	96.39	94.75	95.20
Nipaquay Elementary	NULL	NULL	89.31
Non-Public Schools	NULL	NULL	1.07
Normal Heights Elementary	94.21	86.59	89.82
Nye Elementary	95.80	91.80	92.27
Oak Park Elementary	94.13	86.81	88.94
Ocean Beach Elementary	95.00	91.88	92.88
Pacific Beach Elementary	95.83	92.61	93.67
Pacific Beach Middle	94.78	92.72	94.19
Pacific View Leadership Elem	93.43	87.60	90.02
Paradise Hills Elementary	95.20	85.11	88.53
Penn Elementary	94.31	86.77	89.93
Perkins K-8	90.43	82.84	85.95
Perry Elementary	94.94	90.59	92.13
Pershing Middle	96.01	92.57	94.09
Point Loma High	95.09	91.79	93.04
Porter Elementary	92.94	81.32	87.40
Riley/New Dawn	78.05	73.20	80.10
Rodriguez Elementary	93.39	82.70	90.78

Attendance Rates

School Name	Percentage of Students Present		
	2018-2019 School Year	2021-2022 School Year	2022-2023 School Year
Rolando Park Elementary	95.25	88.85	92.13
Roosevelt International Middle	95.78	91.10	92.10
Rosa Parks Elementary	94.90	87.32	91.92
Ross Elementary	94.95	86.45	89.97
Rowan Elementary	94.28	88.05	88.97
San Diego Business/Leadership	94.95	84.90	NULL
San Diego High	NULL	NULL	88.93
San Diego Int'l Studies	96.37	93.08	NULL
San Diego Metro Career & Tech	99.78	48.76	99.98
San Diego Science & Technology	95.67	89.40	NULL
San Diego SCPA	96.75	93.48	94.65
Sandburg Elementary	96.57	92.77	92.39
Scripps Elementary	96.95	96.18	95.28
Scripps Ranch High	97.31	95.62	95.82
Sequoia Elementary	95.00	89.79	90.33
Sessions Elementary	95.58	91.57	92.85
Sherman Elementary	94.37	88.00	90.23
Silver Gate Elementary	96.15	92.89	92.91
Spreckels Elementary	95.66	93.10	93.88
Standley Middle	96.40	94.25	96.22
Sunset View Elementary	95.32	92.81	93.63
Taft Middle	96.40	93.46	93.06
Tierrasanta Elementary	96.61	91.59	92.72
Toler Elementary	95.15	90.65	91.48
Torrey Pines Elementary	96.51	93.08	94.35
TRACE	91.50	87.53	89.68
TRACE Seniors	100.00	99.35	NULL
Twain High	99.37	99.78	91.60
University City High	96.69	93.69	94.51
Valencia Park Elementary	94.88	85.76	90.62
Vista Grande Elementary	96.33	91.40	92.82
Walker Elementary	94.70	89.52	91.40
Wangenheim Middle	99.53	91.78	94.23
Washington Elementary	93.54	85.53	87.58
Webster Elementary	93.55	88.82	88.84
Wegeforth Elementary	95.18	87.95	91.50
Whitman Elementary	94.57	89.53	91.66
Whittier K-12	91.57	78.48	81.67
Wilson Middle	95.33	87.58	91.40
Zamorano Elementary	95.06	88.56	91.29



Transit Equity Pilot Impact Study

Final Analysis Report
August 2023



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Executive Summary

The Transit Equity Pilot Study (study) was launched in fall 2022 by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) in partnership with the San Diego Metropolitan System (MTS), North County Transit District (NCTD), and the County of San Diego. The study analyzes the impact of the Youth Opportunity Pass (YOP), a pilot program that provides free transit fare for all youth 18 years old and under in the San Diego region for one year, on youth throughout the region by gathering qualitative data through a survey and virtual focus groups, in order to better understand the impact of the YOP pilot program as decision makers seek to continue the program indefinitely or secure additional funding to temporarily extend the lifetime of the program.

The study project team took several measures to strive for an equitable outreach effort with the goal of having the data be representative of the diverse San Diego region. Ultimately, the **survey** received **1,173 responses** from across the region and the **three virtual focus groups** received **22 participants** of varying ages, ethnicities, and locations throughout San Diego County.

Through analysis of survey responses and focus group results, the team identified five key reoccurring themes (in no particular order):

- YOP saves participants and families money.
- YOP reduces stress and worry.
- YOP helps balance family responsibilities.
- YOP enables access to more places and activities.
- YOP allows for independence.

“Please try your hardest to keep the program because it would really help us . . . save more money for bills, rent, groceries and more.”
– Survey Respondent, 17 years old, San Marcos

“We don’t have money for much consistent gas since it’s so expensive so the bus has really been saving my life. It gives me the opportunity to get to school independently, get a job that is a bit further away and be able to see my friends more often. It gives me independence, freedom and opportunities.”
– Survey Respondent, 17 years old, Ocean Beach

“[The YOP] helps ease the burden of finding transport especially since in our modern time, gas and uber have gotten expensive. Not only does it help us become more environmentally friendly, it opens up doors to places people never felt as though they would’ve explored. . . I’ve explored so much more of San Diego than I ever thought I would because of this program!”
– Survey Respondent, 18 years old, College Area

In summary, the study was successfully able to gather personal narratives along with other qualitative data from youth using the YOP. The following report analyzes the results of the study survey and focus groups and how access to free transit positively affects youth's lives and attitudes toward public transportation use.

How the Youth Opportunity Pass Impacted Transit Equity Pilot Study Respondents



92% ride public transit more now because they have a YOP.



90% agreed they are able to do **more fun activities** with the YOP.



Over 93% of respondents **get to and from places they really need to go**, such as school, work, and doctor appointments.



79% plan to keep riding transit when they are adults.



90% agreed that their **family financially benefits** from the YOP.



Over 91% agreed that they can **always depend on a ride home** because of the YOP.

Background

The Social Equity Early Action Transit Pilot (the pilot) is a partnership between SANDAG, MTS, NCTD, and the County of San Diego to promote social equity within San Diego County's public transit system with a near-term, quickly implemented pilot program. SANDAG worked with a group of local community-based organizations who have been advocating for transit equity for more than a decade to design and launch the Youth Opportunity Pass (YOP) pilot program, offering fare-free transit for all youth 18 years old and under in the San Diego region.

The pilot was formed in 2022 based on recommendations from the SANDAG Regional Plan Social Equity Working Group (SEWG) to create a more equitable region by ensuring that safe, healthy, accessible, and inclusive opportunities are available to everyone in the region. The program received overwhelming support from the SEWG within the initial months of the pilot, and funding has since been extended through June 2026.

As part of the pilot, SANDAG was tasked with evaluating the benefits of the YOP. This research study was formally organized as the Transit Equity Pilot Study (study), measuring the impact the YOP has had on young transit riders and their families by gathering personal narratives and other qualitative data through a survey and focus groups.

Vision, Goals, and Objectives for the Study

In the early phases of the study, the project team hosted a workshop with a subgroup of SANDAG's SEWG focused specifically on the YOP, referred to as the YOP task force. The group determined the following Vision Statement for the study:

This study will successfully illustrate whether the YOP increased transit ridership or improved accessibility among riders 18 years of age and younger by gathering personal narratives and preparing qualitative analysis for decision makers.

To ensure the study measured the impact of the YOP, SANDAG worked with the TPWG to establish the following objectives:

1. Collect survey responses that illustrate whether the YOP increased transit ridership frequency or improved accessibility and equity among riders 18 years of age and younger.
2. Gather personal narratives from people who have been impacted by the YOP.
3. Prepare qualitative analysis for key decision makers to assist in finding long-term funding for free youth transit.

Together, SANDAG and the task force determined the key goals of the YOP pilot program and which of those goals should be evaluated under the study. Ultimately, the group decided that the study would set out to measure the following questions:

- Does the YOP improve quality of life?
 - Does the YOP improve quality of life for youth in the San Diego region by improving access to education, healthcare services, and more?

- Where are youth traveling to using the YOP?
- What impact has the YOP had on youth?
- Does the YOP advance environmental justice?
 - Does the YOP provide all people and communities the right to live, work, and play in a clean and safe environment with safe transportation alternatives and reducing greenhouse gas emissions?
- Does the YOP encourage mode shift?
 - Does the YOP encourage alternatives to driving, thus reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions?
 - Does the YOP provide foundations for youth to become lifelong transit riders and build a transit culture?
- Does the YOP enable equitable access?
 - Does the YOP enable equitable access to transit and opportunities for youth in our region?
- Is the YOP broadly marketed?
 - Is the YOP effectively and broadly marketed so that it is well-known and used by youth throughout the entire region?
- Does the YOP make participating easy?
 - Is the YOP easy to access via mobile applications and via PRONTO cards for those without mobile devices?
- Who is using the YOP?

The following report will illustrate the data and narratives gathered through the survey and subsequent focus groups.

Methodology – Study Participation

Survey Participation

To gather qualitative data to support the goals and vision statement of the study, the project team launched a **three-month survey** and **hosted three virtual focus groups** with YOP users throughout the San Diego region.

Survey Participation Goals

To ensure equitable and accurate representation of voices throughout the region were present in the data, the project team used SANDAG’s Major Statistical Areas (MSAs): **North County West, North County East, North City, East County, Central San Diego, and South Suburban**. The sample population included both English and Spanish speakers and stratified both MTS and NCTD service areas.



The project team aimed to gather at least 150 survey responses per zone for a total of 900 total. Given an eligible population size of approximately 638,000 youth riders aged 6-18 in San Diego County,¹ a sample size of 900 is based on a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of approximately 3.3%. This was designed as a non-probability convenience sampling effort.

Survey Promotion and Participation Approach

Ensuring equitable outreach and receiving data that was representative of the diverse San Diego region was of utmost importance to SANDAG and drove the outreach approach at every step of the way. As such, alongside community-based organization partners, the team developed easy-to-understand surveys in both English and Spanish and deployed a comprehensive outreach program to ensure target audiences were reached. To help bridge the digital divide, SANDAG developed printed versions of the survey in both English and Spanish and coordinated with community-based organizations (CBOs), MTS, and NCTD to distribute and collect them.

Given the target audience of the survey was youth aged 6-18, the primary methods of outreach for this survey included coordinating with SANDAG’s vast network of schools, school districts, and CBOs across the region to promote the survey to their students, parents, members, and networks via a third-party toolkit that included newsletter and social media copy, graphics, and a flier in English and Spanish. Other outreach tactics included paid and organic social media and eblasts.

¹ SANDAG Data Surfer—2021 Population Estimates

Each week, the project team tracked respondent data per zone—including demographics²—to ensure equitable results. In zones where responses were low, the project team implemented tailored outreach tactics, such as sending emails to Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and hosting pop-ups at transit stations where youth typically stop by after school. The team also conducted additional follow-up outreach to elementary schools to increase responses from youth under age 13.

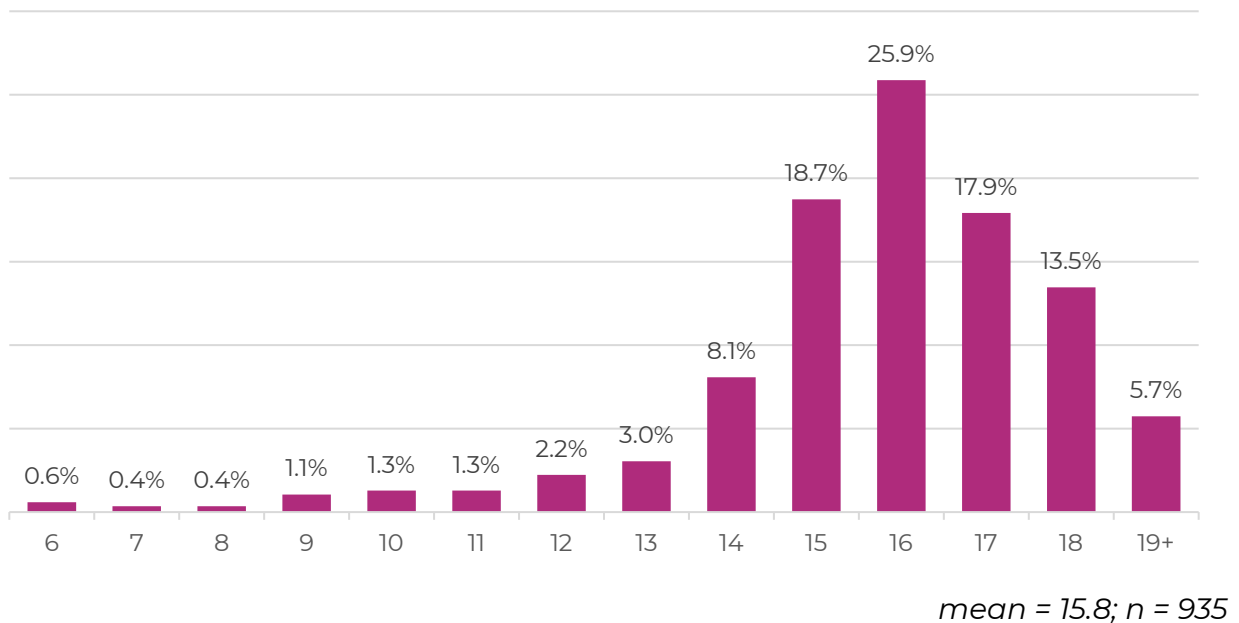
To further motivate youth passholders to complete this survey, respondents could elect to provide a parent or guardian email or phone number to be entered into a sweepstakes to receive a \$50 Visa gift card. The project team pulled contact information every two weeks and randomly selected 12 winners in total.

Survey Participation Results

In total, **the survey received 1,173 responses** – with 1,070 responses from the English survey, and 103 from the Spanish survey – **exceeding the goal** of 900 total responses. While some zones did not reach the 150-response goal set forth by the project team, the demographic breakdown was representative of each zone’s respective populations³, and trend lines were easily identifiable. The total responses per zone for survey respondents who opted to include a ZIP Code or community are: North County West (103), North County East (84), East County (89), Central San Diego (141), North City (178), South Suburban (134).

Figure 1

The average age of our survey respondents was 16 years old, with the following percentages from each age category:

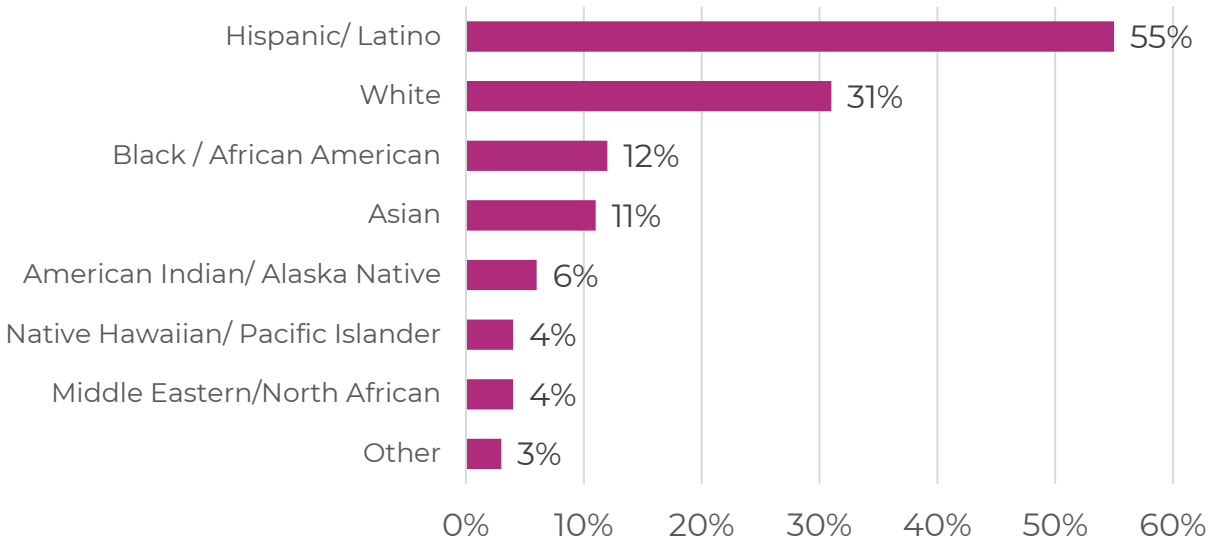


² Demographics include age, race, and cars per household

³ SANDAG Data Surfer—2021 Population Estimates

Figure 2

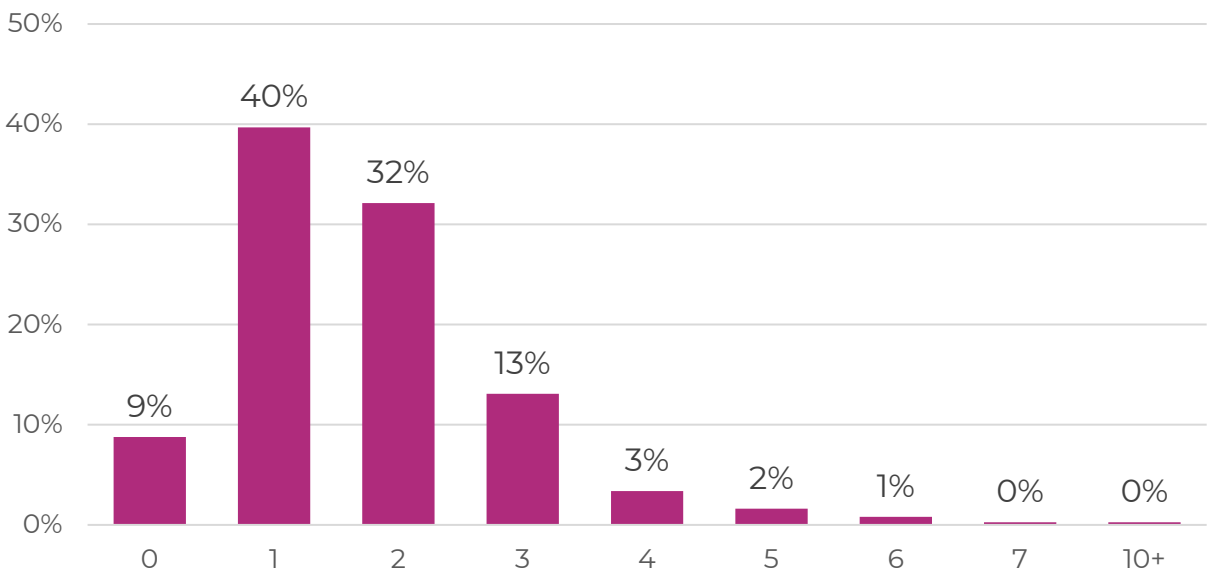
Out of all survey respondents, the most common race and/or ethnicity was Hispanic and/or Latino American. The following percentages represent the distribution of ethnicities across all respondents:



n = 816

Figure 3

Cars Per Household



mean = 1.7; *n* = 741

Details of each of the survey's questions can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Focus Group Participation

To further gather qualitative data to support the study, the project team hosted three virtual focus groups with participants that reflected the region’s demographic breakdown. Each focus group attendee received a \$50 Visa gift card for their participation. Survey sweepstakes winners were not eligible to participate in the focus group to ensure equitable distribution of the incentives.

Focus Group Participation Approach

Over 400 youth passholders who took the survey indicated that they would be interested in participating in a focus group to provide further information on their experience with the YOP. The project team sorted these responses by the youth passholders age, ZIP Code (or community), and ethnicity. Then, goals for participation demographics were set to aim for equitable subregional representation based on population, ethnicity, and gender. Once respondents were categorized by age, location, and ethnicity, the project team elected to email or call the parent or guardian number provided by the youth passholder (unless the youth was 18) to request their attendance at upcoming focus groups.

Focus Group Participation Results

Following the conclusion of the survey, the project team hosted three virtual focus groups:

4. Tuesday, May 9, 2023, 5 – 6 p.m.
5. Wednesday, May 10, 2023, 5 – 6 p.m.
6. Saturday, May 13, 2023, 10 – 11 a.m.

On average, each group had eight participants, including at least one respondent per zone, and ages between 13 and 18 years old. Using Census data for the San Diego region and comparing the population ages 18 and under, the project team was able to achieve a comparable group of participants who mirrored the variety of races/ethnicities throughout the region.⁴

⁴ SANDAG Data Surfer—2021 Population Estimates

Figure 4



n = 22

Focus group participants were overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the YOP in their discussions and comments. Key themes, insights, direct quotes, and opinions from the focus groups can be found in [Appendix B](#) of this report.

Lessons Learned

Any successful study encounters and overcomes unique situations in acquiring information and working with its target audience. In gathering survey responses to support the goal of 150 responses per identified zone, the project team discovered high result counts in certain zones utilizing organic outreach methods, while those in other zones were less responsive. Hosting two pop-up events at busy transit stations zones where responses were low to meet youth as they are commuting home from school proved to be successful. For future efforts, the project team recommends continuously adapting outreach based on ongoing response rates.

Another key takeaway from the study project was the importance of having different methods of contact used to gather focus group participants. Within the survey, youth could select if they wished to be contacted to be part of a focus group about their experience with the YOP. Youth primarily left email addresses, however both emails and phone numbers were valid response types. Through a trial-and-error process, the project team discovered contact via phone was the most successful method of communication in securing participants for focus group participation.

Results

The results of the data collection and analysis for the study paint a picture of a successful YOP program that is viewed positively by its users. The following sections review the responses to the survey questions, organized by the themes and goals of the study, and how the responses support the continuation of the YOP program from the perspective of its users.

Analysis Methodology

Responses collected through the survey were analyzed in a few ways to best understand the pass users' perceptions of the program, how the YOP has been used, and how the YOP has benefitted passholders and their families. Most questions were analyzed to indicate the number of respondents that selected a particular response option by count and percentage. Some questions were analyzed according to comparison with other respondents or response options, also by count and percentage. A brief explanation of the analysis and any considerations and observations is included with each response type below. A more detailed table of the responses and analysis plus additional demographic analyses are included in [Appendix A](#).

Important notes and observations about the analysis:

- If a respondent completed a response to a question, their response was counted in the analysis of that question, regardless of their responses (or lack thereof) to other questions. Not all survey respondents that began the survey completed every question.⁵
- The survey was conducted in two languages – English and Spanish. The data from each independent language survey were combined into a master dataset and analyzed together. Spanish language responses were translated to English to facilitate analysis.
- All study zones or areas of San Diego County were represented by the survey respondents. Most respondents indicated they did not know their ZIP Code, or in some cases, did not respond to the question. However, some respondents knew the name of the community or neighborhood where they live. Based on either the ZIP Code provided or neighborhood/community chosen from a drop-down list, the most selected neighborhoods/communities where respondents live included: City Heights, Chula Vista, San Diego (City), Rolando, Logan Heights, and San Ysidro. Alpine was also high in the top choices, but it has been noted that Alpine was the first community in the drop-down list, so there is the possibility that some respondents may have made the first choice available to them without reading the entire list of choices.
- The survey was designed to include skip logic to ensure only the correct audience responded to all survey questions. Question 1 allowed for parents or other adults to note if they were assisting a youth passholder with completing the survey from the youth's point of view. Therefore, those who answered that they (or whomever they were taking the

⁵ Of the 1,173 responses, 821 respondents made it to the end of the survey. Not every respondent answered every question.

survey on behalf of) were 19+ years, they were auto directed to the end of the survey using skip logic, given that the YOP is only valid for those 18 and under. Question 3 asked if the respondent (or whomever they were taking the survey on behalf of) had a YOP and answering “no” to that would skip them to the end of the survey. Over 80% of those who started the survey were 18 and under and at least 80% of those respondents have and use a YOP.

- The project team had originally identified "Advances Environmental Justice" as one of the goals to measure. Because there is no direct qualitative data aligned with this goal, the survey results can only indicate a tertiary conclusion. Therefore, it is not included in this final report.

Response Summaries

This section organizes the results of the data analysis according to the key goals of the YOP pilot program:

1. Improves quality of life
2. Enables equitable access
3. Encourages mode shift
4. Is marketed broadly
5. Makes participating easy

Questions were repeated across goals if they applied to multiple goals. Unless otherwise indicated, the below charts show the percentage of affirmative (Really Agree or Agree) responses received for each question⁶.

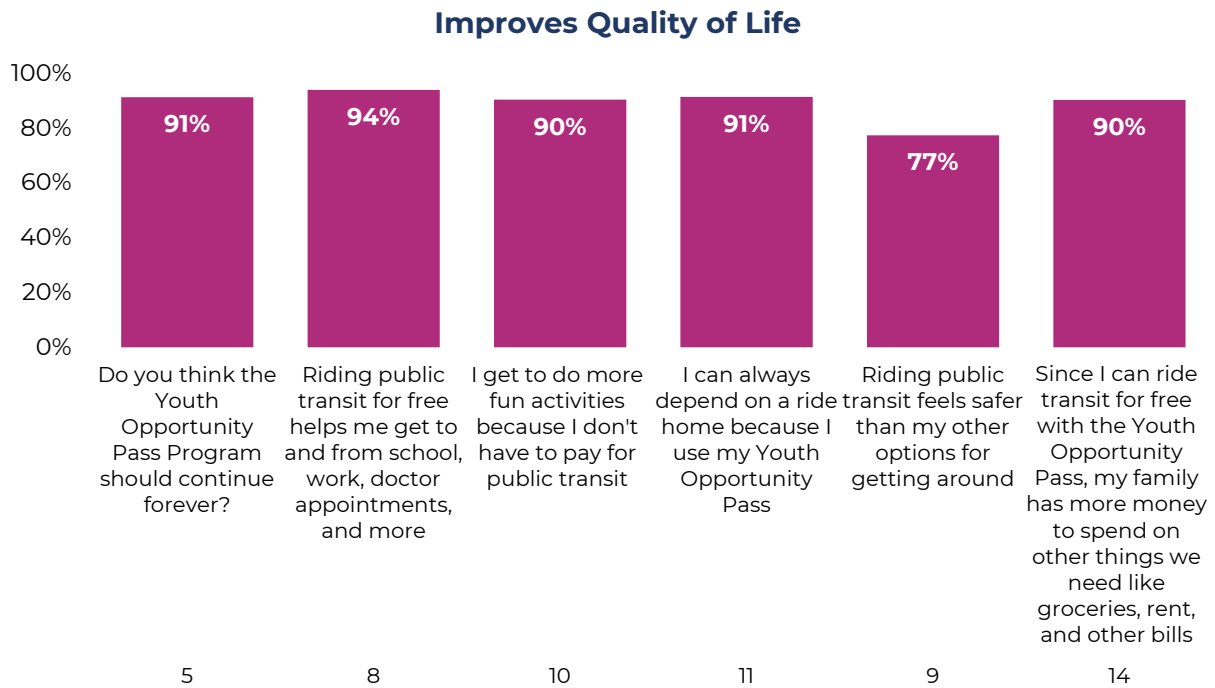
Improves Quality of Life

Does the YOP improve quality of life for youth in San Diego County by improving access to education, healthcare services, and more? Where are youth traveling to using the YOP? What impact has the YOP had on youth?

The data suggest the YOP has improved quality of life for 94% of respondents in the San Diego region, providing free transit to get to health services, education, after-school activities, work, internships, and more. Some respondents also said they use their YOP to go to museums, downtown events, the gym, skate parks, the airport, field trips, and other local attractions. Further, 90% of respondents agreed or really agreed that their family benefits financially since they are able to ride transit for free with the YOP. This allows for funds to be used for groceries, rent, and other household or personal expenses.

⁶ Response scale: Really Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Agree, Really Agree

Figure 5



n = 814

Encourages Mode Shift

Does the YOP encourage alternatives to driving, thus reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled and greenhouse gas emissions? Does the YOP provide foundations for youth to become lifelong transit riders and build a transit culture?

Planning for the future of our youth is pertinent to the success of our region, especially in planning for a safe and clean environment that can withhold the stressors of climate change. By encouraging youth to learn the ins and outs of public transportation at a young age, the YOP allows youth to consider mode shift by opting to use transit instead of a single occupancy vehicle now and in the future. This shift in perception of public transportation will result in increased ridership through adulthood and benefit regional efforts to meet the climate goals outlined by the State of California.

One third of respondents (32%) of respondents said they did not use transit before the YOP, indicating that the free pass may have enabled or encouraged them to use transit. Additionally, about four-fifths (80% percent) of respondents plan to keep using transit when they are adults, pointing to the adoption of transit usage for the future population, assisting the region in meeting its current and future transportation and climate goals.

Figure 6

Encourages Mode Shift

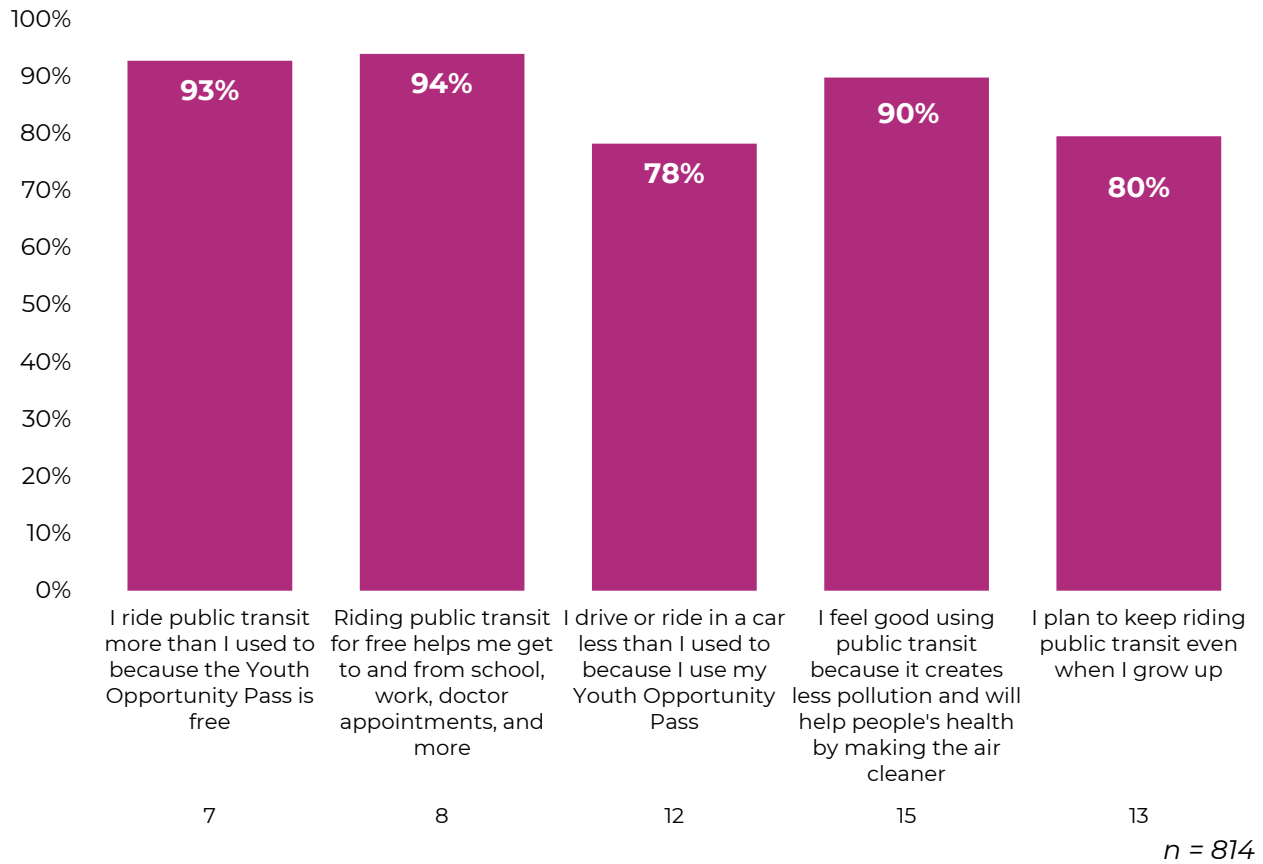
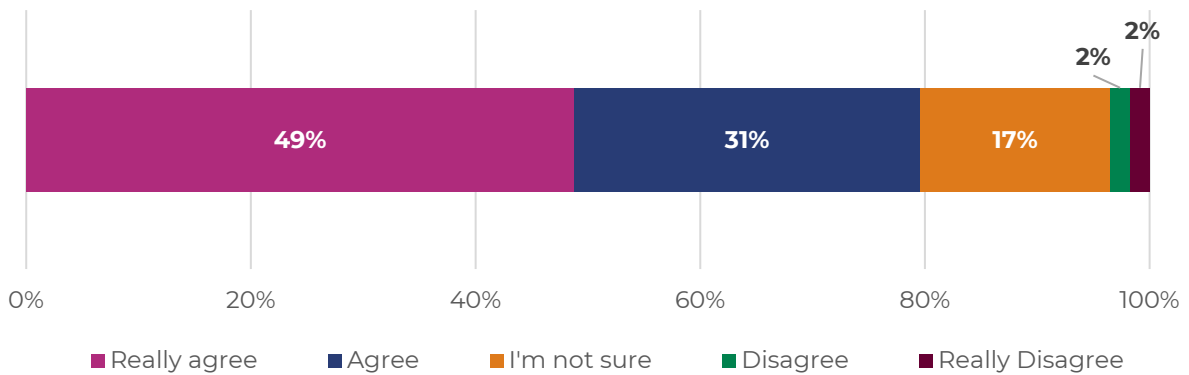


Figure 7

I plan to keep riding public transit even when I grow up



n = 818

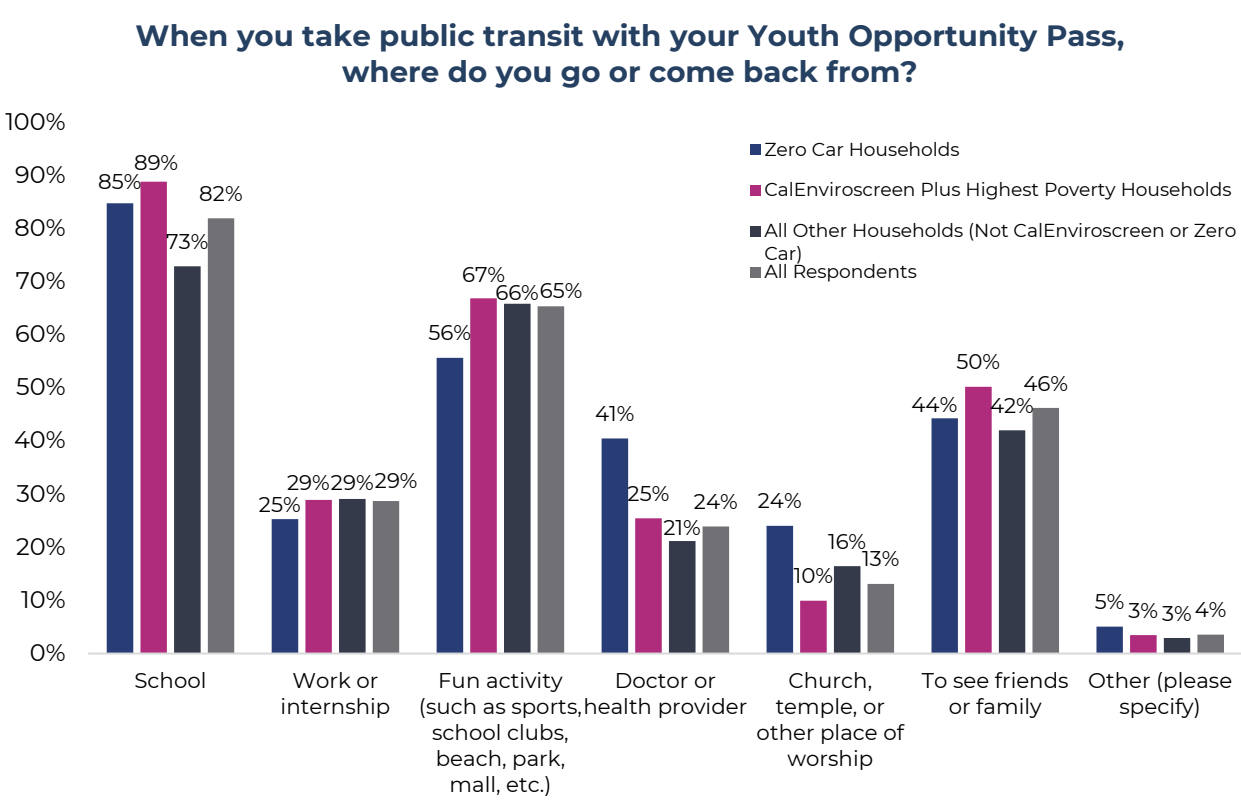
Enables Equitable Access

Does the YOP enable equitable access to transit and opportunities for youth in our region?

This analysis looked at two subsets of the respondent data to better understand how the YOP may be positively impacting certain demographics that may be transit dependent or within highest poverty communities. In the first subset, transit dependence was analyzed by looking at zero-car households. The second subset were respondents from high poverty communities as defined by the State of California, CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Highest Poverty Census Tracts to the 80th percentile. The analysis reviews how respondents within these populations were using the YOP to go where they needed to and wanted to go, as compared with other respondents that are not within these populations (i.e., not zero-car households or CalEnviroScreen Highest Poverty households), and with the entire set of all respondents.

Figure 8 below illustrates the differences in how the YOP is used by respondents within each of the above-described populations. Although youth from all segments are riding transit for various activities, there is a notably higher percentage of zero-car household respondents and CalEnviroScreen respondents that use their YOP to ride transit to school and go to the doctor or healthcare appointments (n = 4 - 668).

Figure 8



n = 815

Is Broadly Marketed

Is the YOP effectively and broadly-marketed that it is well-known and used by youth throughout the entire region?

In order to measure the effectiveness of the YOP, the team also needed to assess if the outreach to inform youth and their families about the pass availability and how to obtain one was effective. In doing so, the planning team identified the following:

- The top four ways that youth heard about the YOP was from their school; parents; family or friends; and media and the internet.
- **Sixty percent** of youth use a **physical PRONTO card** rather than using the PRONTO app, suggesting overall effectiveness of in-person YOP marketing.
- Most users signed up to get the YOP at school or at the MTS or NCTD office.

The plurality of participants heard about the pass and signed up for the pass at school, so future marketing efforts should consider the importance of this connection. Additional information below may help to understand how to continue future YOP marketing.

Figure 9

Where did you sign up to get your Youth Opportunity Pass?

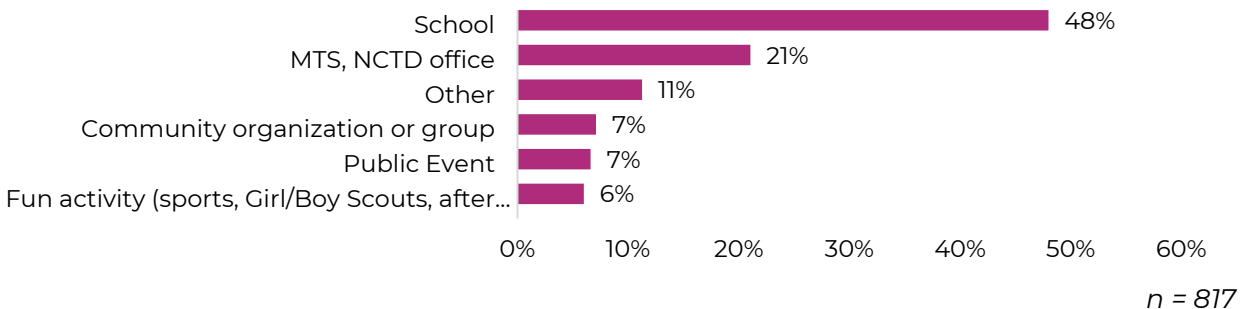
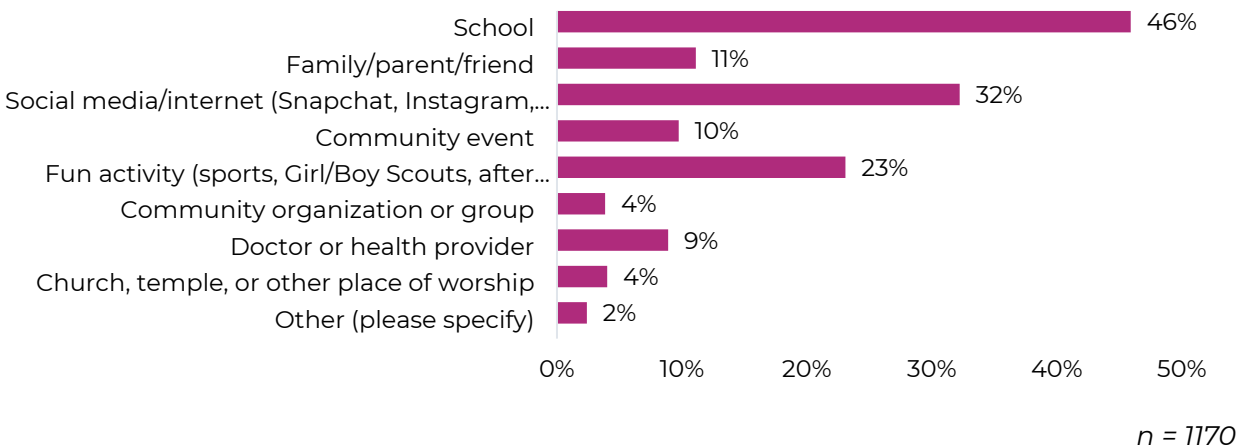


Figure 10

How did you hear about the Youth Opportunity Pass?



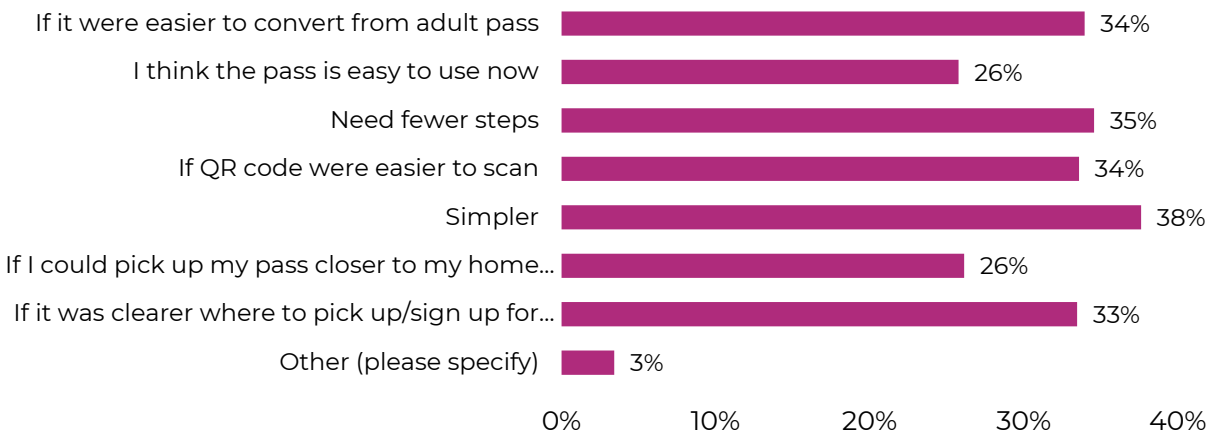
Makes Participating Easy

Is the YOP easy to access via mobile applications and via PRONTO cards for those without mobile devices?

The following two charts illustrate how youth heard about the Youth Opportunity Pass and what would make it easier for them to participate in the program. Respondents had opinions across the board regarding how to make the YOP easier to use. Some (34%) indicated it would be helpful if it were easier to transfer their adult pass to a youth pass, while 26% thought the pass was easy to use now. Simplification of the app, easier QR code scanning at the stations/stops, and fewer steps for signing up were also indicated.

Figure 11

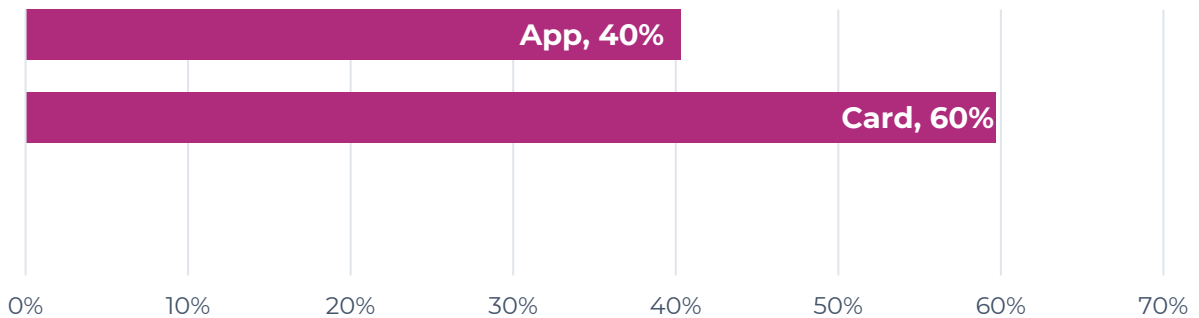
What would make the Youth Opportunity Pass easier to use or sign up for?



n = 819

Figure 12

Is your Youth Opportunity Pass an actual PRONTO card or the one shown on your PRONTO app?



n = 814

Opinions on Extending the Program

The overarching desire for the YOP program to continue forever is indicative of the positive impact that the program has had on youths' ability to access places they want to go and improvement in their quality of life.

Survey respondents were asked to provide a written response to this question: "Is there anything else that you want to tell us about the Youth Opportunity Pass?" In their responses, participants strongly suggested that the program should continue and that the YOP, along with the opportunities it provides them with, are appreciated and, in some cases, essential. Many respondents also simply expressed gratitude for the YOP, saying, "Thank you so much for this pass," and, "Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity." The word cloud in Figure 2 displays key phrases and words used in the participants' responses.

Figure 13 – YOP Program extension



"The youth pass is the greatest thing that has happened. In my personal life experience I live a bit further from [City Heights] and my school goes all the way to [La] Jolla . . . [If] it weren't for the youth pass I would waste a lot of money." – Survey Respondent, 15 years old, San Diego

"This [pass] really has changed not just my life, but many of my [friends'] lives. The freedom of being able to use safe public transport for free is an invaluable resource. Thank you."

– Survey Respondent, 17 years old, Spring Valley

"Please try your hardest to keep the program because it would really help . . . us save more money for bills, rent, groceries and more." – Survey Respondent, 17 years old, San Marcos

"I'm very grateful and appreciate how much this card has helped since I started college. I overall started going out more and don't stress at all anymore about having a ride or having to pay for a ride." – Survey Respondents, 18 years old, San Ysidro

Themes

Responses received from the open-ended questions in the study survey provided extensive insights into how the pass benefits the youth and their families to help us better understand how the YOP pilot program is advancing regional goals. The survey asked youth to provide written answers to the following questions:

- Do you think the Youth Opportunity Pass Program should continue forever?
- If yes, what would it mean to you and your family if the Youth Opportunity Pass kept going even longer?
- Is there anything else that you want to tell us about the Youth Opportunity Pass?

The responses to these questions were analyzed and put through a detailed coding process to recognize major themes throughout the survey. In doing so, five key reoccurring themes were identified (in no particular order):

1. YOP saves participants and families money.
2. YOP reduces stress and worry.
3. YOP helps balance family responsibilities.
4. YOP enables access to more places and activities.
5. YOP allows for independence.

The key themes discovered throughout the survey were explored even further in three different focus groups. Responses received during focus groups further upheld the five key themes identified in the survey. More information about the open-ended survey questions and responses, as well as the participation in the focus groups, can be found in the [Results](#) section of this report.

The below section provides a closer look at comments received from youth in both the survey and focus groups as they pertain to the key themes.

The YOP Saves Participants and Families Money

One hundred and sixty comments received throughout the survey were related to concerns surrounding finances and how the YOP has helped alleviate financial stress on youth and their families. Some students shared that their family could not afford regular-priced transit passes, so having access to the YOP allowed them to become transit riders for the first time. Many participants mentioned the financial relief free transit gives them in light of the rising costs of gas and shared mobility services. Participants shared that the money they are now saving by using transit is being used to pay for groceries, services, bills, fun activities, and more. Having access to free transit means one less expense for families who have had to “cut back on a lot of things” and are “barely able to buy food”. Overall, based on the survey results, the YOP is providing more financial security for youth and their families in the San Diego region.

Figure 14 - The YOP Saves Money for Participants and Their Families



“It’d mean a lot for my family and me [if the YOP continues forever]. My parents are busy both day and night and do not have the time to be giving us rides to school. My siblings and I, (before PRONTO) had to wake up at 6am every morning and rely on busses as transportation. We take two busses each to get to our school and two busses back to home. Before PRONTO, we’d pay daily and realized it’d be cheaper if we just buy the monthly pass. We are 3 in total, so our monthly passes totaled up to around 70 dollars. It was super expensive and I always felt a heartache having to take out that much money to afford transportation to school instead of spending it on groceries. I believe that the Youth Opportunity Pass should keep going longer because I know there are many low-income families who are in similar situations and struggle with transportation and money . . . I’m soon going to go to University, and I know that still my siblings won’t be having a ride to get to school since I won’t be there and my parents will be working day and night.” – Survey Respondent, 15 years old, Logan Heights

“[Extending the YOP] would help me and my family because we need to save money because my Dad doesn’t have a job at the moment and having the pass helps us save money.”
– Survey Respondent, 15 years old, Barrio Logan

“I will be able to get back and forth to school and that will save on my mom having to purchase a bus pass every month.” – Survey Respondent, 15 years old, Logan Heights

“[El YOP ha sido] Una gran ayuda para nosotros que somos de bajos recursos y nos ahorramos dinero cuando salimos al doctor, a pasear, y cuando vamos a entrenamientos de la escuela.” (The YOP has been a great help for us who are low-income, and we save money when we go to the doctor, when we go out, and when we go to school training.) – Survey Respondent, 8 years old, City Heights

“Before the Youth Opportunity Pass, I would pay for the regular pass myself. Right now, I am actually saving enough money to be able to move out of my parents’ home.”

– Focus Group Participant, 17 years old, Mira Mesa

“Before the [Youth Opportunity Pass], [my parents would] always . . . stress about having to pay . . . monthly payments [for] my pass. Now it is one less thing for them to worry about.”

– Focus Group Participant, 16 years old, Hillcrest

The YOP Reduces Stress and Worry

An additional finding through the analysis of the survey responses demonstrated that the YOP relieved overall stress for youth personally, as well as their parents and families. Youth shared that some families have limitations such as disabilities, homelessness, or illnesses and the pass helps “lighten the burden.”

“[If the YOP were extended, we] wouldn’t have to stress out about driving me to my programs and my sister to school at SDSU and my other sister to San Marcos at the same times. It would help us all travel around faster since we can’t drive at the moment and my parents have work as well.”

– Survey Respondent, 16 years old, City Heights

Figure 15 - The YOP Reduces Stress and Worry



“I’m a senior in high school and [the YOP] really helped me to be able to get to school safely while my mother goes to work and soon I’ll be starting college so that’ll just be a stress reliever off me . . . [because] I know that I have transportation to get to school.”

– Survey Respondent, 17 years old, Linda Vista

“It would honestly mean a lot [if the YOP were extended] because all of my younger siblings including [myself] still go to school and being able to take public transit freely is much less stressful.”

– Survey Respondent, 18 years old, City Heights

“[El YOP] me ayuda demasiado a llegar a mi escuela y trabajo ya que mis padres no me pueden llevar y traer. Me hace sentir autosuficiente.” (The YOP helps me a lot to get to school and work since my parents can’t take me back and forth. It makes me feel self-sufficient.)

– Survey Respondent, 17 years old, Midway District

“I have a lot of anxiety about being on time to things, so I feel like [free transit] really helped because it’s so consistent. I know I don’t have to worry about . . . my friend [giving] me a ride, or [having] to walk there. I feel like it’s very convenient to be able to have this as . . . a backup or just . . . to plan on [using transit] because I know it’s always going to be consistent.”

– Focus Group Participant, 15 years old, Otay Ranch

“I used to be . . . an hour late [to school] like every day, . . . but now with the pass I get there faster just because [my parents] don’t have to worry about traffic.”

– Focus Group Participant, 14 years old, Lemon Grove

The YOP Helps Balances Family Responsibilities

For many families in the San Diego region, youth are closely involved and concerned with daily family affairs and sharing responsibilities their parents. In the analysis, we found that the YOP has helped both youth and their families balance these responsibilities. For youth whose parents do not have flexible work schedules, the YOP helped youth have an affordable, safe, and reliable ride to and from school that does not require their parents to take time off from work. Multiple respondents discussed how the affordability and convenience of the YOP helped them assist younger brothers or sisters in riding transit, while others discussed using it to visit or care for extended family members.

“[Extending the YOP would mean] I would be able to arrive to school on time without any issues [and] my family wouldn’t have to worry about being late to pick me and my siblings up.”

– Survey Respondent, 14 years old, Vista

“I really love the Youth Opportunity Pass because it allows not only me but my younger siblings to be able to [ride] the bus for free. My parents are really busy working every day and they can’t pick us up from school . . . I have 5 siblings in total in either high school or middle school so this Youth Opportunity Pass [has] given my family and I the privilege of taking the bus back home [and] to school. This means that my family is saving money for bus rides but this also means that we are given attention from the public transportation that we really need. . . to learn and to get home. This really means a lot to me and my family and I hope this will continue even for those attending college or older because this is really helpful and [I] love it!”

– Survey Respondent 17 years old, Chula Vista

“Personally, my mom works nights, so anytime I wanted a ride home, [I’d] have [to say], “Hey, can you give me a ride?” [My mom] was consistently losing sleep by giving me rides places. When this program started, she didn’t have to worry about it.”

– Focus Group Participant, 16 years old, La Mesa

“The Youth Opportunity pass allows me to go see my family after school. Money is tough to come by.”

– Survey Respondent, 15 years old, San Diego

Figure 16 - The YOP Helps Balance Family Responsibilities



“[Having free transit relieves] a lot less stress on my parents knowing that they don't have to drive down to my school to pick me and my siblings up . . . after working. They don't have to get off work a little earlier than they usually do, so they can still make money . . . I just feel like it's a lot more simple and easy.”

– Focus Group Participant, 16 years old, El Cajon

The YOP Allows for Independence

In the research conducted through study, youth in the San Diego region shared that the YOP allows for a greater sense of independence and freedom. Having access to free transit means having a ride. For youth whose parents' work schedules that make it challenging to get where they need to go, the YOP provides reliable transportation without depending on somebody else for a ride. Some youth even shared that access to free transit meant they were able to get a job, providing them with even more financial security and independence.

Figure 18 - The YOP Allows for Independence



“[Because of the YOP, I] can get around on my own without bugging my parents for a ride, or paying for one in an Uber.” – Survey Respondent, 17 years old, Skyline

“My mom doesn't drive, so [extending the YOP] would mean that I can ride the bus for free without her having to struggle to pay for my bus ticket. Being able to ride free means I can also travel in the bus wherever with my family” – Survey Respondent, 11 years old, Vista

“We don't have money for much consistent gas since it's so expensive so the bus has really been saving my life. It gives me the opportunity to get to school independently, get a job that is a bit further away and be able to see my friends more often. It gives me independence, freedom and opportunities.” – Survey Respondent, 17 years old, Ocean Beach

“[Es] Muy importante para ahorrar tiempo y para que los jóvenes lleguen a tiempo de clase y para que los jóvenes sean más independientes.” (It's very important to save time and for young people to arrive on time to class and for young people to be more independent.)
– Survey Respondent, 15 years old, Clairemont

“I don't know when I am getting my license, or if I want to, because I feel like I can get to most places pretty easily while taking transit, so I don't really have any plans to stop.”
– Focus Group Participant, 17 years old, Rolando Village

“[Having free transit was] kind of like a lifeline . . . when I didn't have friends to offer me rides. It was very helpful, so I didn't have to worry about getting to places.”
– Focus Group Participant, 17 years old, Carlsbad

Conclusion

This study reached its target goals of: (1) collecting survey responses that illustrate increased youth transit ridership as a result of the YOP (as well as data to support that the YOP provides more equitable transportation access for youth); (2) gathering hundreds of personal narratives from YOP users that support the continuation of the YOP pilot program; and (3) creating this Report, which provides key information and analyses on the success of the YOP pilot program.

As illustrated in this report and supported by the data, the YOP improved quality of life for youth and their families through increased independence and access to resources, encouraged mode shift by reassuring public transportation as a viable source of mobility, and enabled equitable transportation access through the zero-cost fare.

SANDAG'S YOP pilot program is anticipated to end in June 2026 unless increased funding is secured. The personal narratives and other qualitative data in this report demonstrate the various successes of the program and stress the need for it to be made permanent as a necessity for youth and their families throughout the region.

Appendices

Appendix A: Survey

Survey Question No.	Question	Snapshot of All Results (English and Spanish)	Related Project Goal
1	What best describes you?	81% - I'm younger than 19 19% - I'm helping a young person take this survey	*Demographics
2	Have you heard of the Youth Opportunity Pass? (This is the program that lets anyone 18 and under ride the bus, train, or trolley for free in San Diego County using a Youth PRONTO pass).	89% - Yes 11% - No	*Demographics
3	Do you have a Youth PRONTO Pass or App that you use to ride the bus, train, or trolley for free? (sometimes the bus, train, or trolley are called public transit)	80% - yes 20% - no	*Demographics
4	How old are you? (Reminder: if you're helping a young person take the survey, please select their age and answer the following questions using their opinions)	<1% - 6 <1% - 7 <1% - 8 1% - 9 2% - 10 1% - 11 2% - 12 3% - 13 8% - 14 18% - 15 25% - 16 18% - 17 13% - 18 6% - 19+	*Demographics

Survey Question No.	Question	Snapshot of All Results (English and Spanish)	Related Project Goal
5	Do you think the Youth Opportunity Pass Program should continue forever?	91% - Yes 3% - No 6% - I'm not sure	-Improve Quality of Life
6	If yes, what would it mean to you and your family if the Youth Opportunity Pass kept going forever?	These responses summarized and addressed in the Open Response section of the Final Report	*Qualitative Data
7	I ride public transit more than I used to because the Youth Opportunity Pass is free	65% - Really Agree 28% - Agree 4% - Not sure 2% - Disagree <1% - Really Disagree	-Encourage Mode Shift -Create Lifelong Transit Users -Advance Environmental Justice
8	Riding public transit for free helps me get to and from school, work, doctor appointments, and more	71% - Really Agree 23% - Agree 3% - Not sure 2% - Disagree 1% - Really Disagree	-Improve Quality of Life -Encourage Mode Shift
9	Riding public transit feels safer than my other options for getting around	39% - Really Agree 38% - Agree 16% - Not sure 6% - Disagree 1% - Really Disagree	-Improve Quality of Life -Advance Environmental Justice
10	I get to do more fun activities because I don't have to pay for public transit	65% - Really Agree 26% - Agree 7% - Not sure 2% - Disagree <1% - Really Disagree	-Improve Quality of Life -Create Lifelong Transit Users
11	I can always depend on a ride home because I use my Youth Opportunity Pass	66% - Really Agree 25% - Agree 5% - Not sure 3% - Disagree <1% - Really Disagree	-Improve Quality of Life
12	I drive or ride in a car less than I used to because I use my Youth Opportunity Pass	46% - Really Agree 32% - Agree 14% - Not sure 6% - Disagree 2% - Really Disagree	-Encourage Mode Shift

Survey Question No.	Question	Snapshot of All Results (English and Spanish)	Related Project Goal
13	I plan to keep riding public transit even when I grow up	49% - Really Agree 31% - Agree 17% - Not sure 2% - Disagree 2% - Really Disagree	-Encourage Mode Shift -Create Lifelong Transit Users
14	Since I can ride transit for free with the Youth Opportunity Pass, my family has more money to spend on other things we need like groceries, rent, and other bills	65% - Really Agree 25% - Agree 6% - Not sure 2% - Disagree <1% - Really Disagree	-Improve Quality of Life
15	I feel good using public transit because it creates less pollution and will help people's health by making the air cleaner	62% - Really Agree 28% - Agree 9% - Not sure <1% - Disagree <1% - Really Disagree	-Encourage Mode Shift -Advance Environmental Justice
16	Is your Youth Opportunity Pass an actual PRONTO card or the one shown on your PRONTO app?	40% - App 60% - Card	-Is Broadly Marketed -Makes Participating Easy
17	What would make the Youth Opportunity Pass easier to use or sign up for? (select all that apply)	14% - If the app was simpler 15% - If there were fewer steps for signing up 17% - If it were easier to transfer my adult pass to a youth pass 15% - If scanning the QR code to ride the bus/trolley was easier 11% - If it was clearer where to pick up/sign up for my pass 11% - If I could pick up my pass closer to my home or school 15% - I think the pass is easy to use now 2% - Other (please specify)	-Is Broadly Marketed -Makes Participating Easy

Survey Question No.	Question	Snapshot of All Results (English and Spanish)	Related Project Goal
18	How did you hear about the Youth Opportunity Pass? (select all that apply)	33% - School 17% - Social Media 7% - Fun activity 23% - Family/parent/friend 7% - Community Event 3% - Doctor or health provider 2% - Church, temple, or other place of worship 6% - Community organization 2% - Other (please specify)	-Is Broadly Marketed -Makes Participating Easy
19	Where did you sign up to get your Youth Opportunity Pass?	50% - School 20% - MTC, NCTD office 6% - Community Organization 6% - Fun Activity 6% - Public event 12% - Other (please specify)	-Is Broadly Marketed -Makes Participating Easy
20	When you take public transit with your Youth Opportunity Pass, where do you go or come back from? (select all that apply)	31% - School 25% - Fun activity (such as sports, school clubs, beach, park, mall, etc.) 18% - To see friends or family 11% - Work or internship 9% - Doctor or health provider 5% - Church, temple, or other place of worship 1% - Other (please specify)	-Is Broadly Marketed
21	Did you ride public transit before using the Youth Opportunity Pass?	65% - Yes 32% - No 3% - I'm not sure/ I don't know	-Encourage Mode Shift
22	How many people live with you?	<1% - 0 4% - 1 11% - 2 24% - 3 25% - 4 18% - 5 10% - 6 3% - 7 2% - 8 1% - 9 1% - 10+ <1% - I'm not sure	*Demographics

Survey Question No.	Question	Snapshot of All Results (English and Spanish)	Related Project Goal
23	How many cars do the people you live with have?	9% - 0 39% - 1 32% - 2 13% - 3 3% - 4 2% - 5 <1% - 6 <1% - 7 <1% - 10+ <1% - I'm not sure	*Demographics
24	What best describes your race or ethnicity? (you can pick more than one)	55% - Hispanic and/or Latino American 31% - White and/or European American 12% - Black and/or African American 11% - Asian American 6% - American Indian and/or Alaska Native 4% - Native Hawaiian and/or other Pacific Islander 4% - Middle Eastern and/or North African 3% - Other (please specify)	*Demographics
25	Do you know your ZIP Code?	6% - No 62% - Yes 32% Blank (not answered)	*Demographics
26	What is your ZIP Code?	See ZIP Code analysis (Appendix C)	*Demographics
27	What part of San Diego County do you live in?	Top 10 communities selected: City Heights 16% Chula Vista 7% San Diego 7% Alpine 6% Vista 5% Oceanside 5% San Ysidro 5% Barrio Logan 4% National City 4%	*Demographics

Survey Question No.	Question	Snapshot of All Results (English and Spanish)	Related Project Goal
28	To enter the sweepstakes to win a \$50 VISA gift card, please type in your parent or guardian's email address so we can contact them if you're a winner.	726 respondents provided an email address or phone number	*Survey Incentive
29	If you'd like to be in a virtual focus group to talk to us more about this program and receive a \$50 VISA gift card, please type in your parent or guardian's email address or phone number and we'll contact them if you get picked.	493 provided an email address or phone number to be included in a focus group	*Focus Group Selection
30	Is there anything else that you want to tell us about the Youth Opportunity Pass?	495 respondents provided additional comments	*Qualitative Data

Appendix B: Focus Group Transcripts

May 9 Focus Group

Participant A: 18 years old, North City

Participant B: 15 years old, North County West

Participant C: 16 years old, Central San Diego

Participant D: 17 years old, North City

Participant E: 14 years old, North County East

Participant F: 18 years old, North City

Participant G: 16 years old, East County

Participant H: 16 years old, Central San Diego

Where do you take transit? School? Work/Internship? Personal Appointments? After School Activities?

Facilitator: If everyone feels comfortable, let's get started with our first question. We want to explore a little bit more about where you're taking transit. And tonight, when I say transit, we're talking about riding the bus, or riding a train. Right, we're taking public transit. Let's look at that first question there. Do me a favor, raise your hand if you take transit to school. So here I am looking for each of you to raise your hand if you take transit to school. Great. So I see a couple of folks. I see "Participant A and Participant F" have raised their hands. "Participant A", where is your school located?

Participant A: My school is in Chula Vista.

Facilitator: Oh in Chula Vista, very good. And "Participant F" how about you, where is your school? Oh you're at San Diego State?

Participant F: Yeah, actually I dorm there but usually when I come back from, so I actually live in Riverside County like with my family, but when I go back to school I take the transit sometimes from Escondido.

Facilitator: Perfect. Thanks for that. Ok let's go ahead and lower hands. You know we have some different age folks on here. I want to ask, if you are working or you have an internship, are you taking transit to work or to your internship? Raise your hand if you're taking transit to work or an internship. Yeah great. And I hear a parent helping which is wonderful. I see a number of youth have raised their hand. "Participant D," you've raised your hand. Do you have a job or an internship?

Participant D: Yes, yes I do. So I actually have two jobs. One is like two or three miles away in La Mesa. The other one is in Del Mar. If I can make a request, it would be that there be more stops in Del Mar. Besides the 101, if there were more roads to Del Mar, that would be fabulous. Just because I work that job but yeah.

Participant C: I work at Hillcrest.

Facilitator: In Hillcrest, ok.

Participant C: Yeah not too far.

Facilitator: I was just going to ask, are you typically heading to work after school or on a weekend?

Participant C: After school, I work after school on Thursdays. My mom usually drives like me after school. Kinda have to. Usually on the weekends, that's when I like take the bus and stuff.

Facilitator: And you can take the bus, ok good. Thanks for that. Other folks that raised their hand about working or internships, anything you want to share with us before I move onto the next question. Let's talk about maybe taking, using transit to run an errand. We're interested in learning a little more about maybe a personal appointment, have you ever ridden the bus or taken the trolley, say to an eye exam or an orthodontist appointment? Perhaps the grocery store? Raise your hand if you're using transit to run errands or for some personal appointments. Ok good. Looks good. Does anyone I see, "Participant H, Participant F, Participant D, and Participant A" anybody want to chat about how their using transit to run an errand?

Participant A: I can. I actually did today. I went to Michaels to pick up some craft supplies. I also often use it to go to doctors' appointments when my mom can't take time off work to drive me there because I have a lot of doctors' appointments.

Facilitator: Yeah, well hopefully those all are keeping you very healthy and I think that's very interesting you're taking it over to Michaels to get your craft supplies. Thanks for sharing that. Anybody else? Where are you riding transit for errands or any personal appointments. Anyone else wish to share?

Participant F: Oh yeah, I was going to say the same as "Participant A." I have taken it to Michaels because I have a small business, so I get stuff from Michaels. I also, since I have a meal plan, it doesn't work on the weekends. I usually go and go out to eat or try to explore new places to eat over the weekend.

Facilitator: Wow that is very interesting. Has the transit, when you're operating your small business, are you able to use transit to get around or are you doing most of your work remotely.

Participant F: Well, it's more remote just because our college campus has like a Maker's Day that, once a semester, where they let us sell our stuff. A few trips to Michaels here and there to get all my supplies.

Facilitator: Wow thanks so much for sharing, "Participant F." Let's just see, since you have the youth pass, have you gone somewhere new or different in San Diego? Perhaps that you couldn't get to by yourself before. Here I'm thinking about, have you been able to go visit a part of San Diego that you've never seen before? Have you used transit to get to the beach? Have you used transit maybe to go for a college site inspection? I see a number of folks raising their hands. "Participant E," do you want to share a little something with us about how you're riding transit?

Participant E: I go to the beach, or I like go to really anywhere. Go to thrift stores.

Facilitator: Oh a thrifter. I am also a thrifter. Thanks for adding that. Good. Other folks that have raised their hands. Thanks for adding that, "Participant E," so much. "Participant C," do you want to share a little bit about cool places you've ridden transit to?

Participant C: My school uses transit as a form of transportation. We don't use buses, we take the public bus and the trolley to get places.

Facilitator: Thanks for adding that. How about you "Participant H?" You want to add anything to this chat? This discussion?

Participant H: Yeah, I just go with my friends in Mira Mesa or literally anywhere.

Facilitator: Literally anywhere. I love that. “Participant F or Participant D,” anything to share?

Participant D: Yes, so most of the time I am usually heading downtown because there's a bunch to do. Or sometimes I will hop on the Blue Line from UTC to explore those places.

Facilitator: I guess, one thing, last question that I want to ask to anybody on the call. How does it feel to be able to get to some of these places that you're talking to us about? How does it feel to do that on your own with transit versus in a car, perhaps with your parents, sister, brother giving you a ride? Does anybody want to talk to me a little bit about how it feels to ride transit?

Participant D: Yeah, I mean. I definitely could. It feels very liberating, it makes me feel more autonomous, like my own being. I am very appreciative of that, yes.

Facilitator: Thanks, that was great. Appreciate that. Anyone else want to chat a little bit about how it feels now that you have this free youth pass.

Participant A: I would. It's similar to what “Participant D” was saying. I have been unable to get my license for a lot of health issues and having the youth pass has allowed me to like go hangout with my friends. One time, I felt bored so I took the trolley to Ikea and just walked around, but I couldn't have done that without it. So it's given me a lot of independence in that I don't have to always have to rely on other people to take me places. And it was kind of scary at first learning how to use it just because I am not from San Diego or a big city. So it was very new, but it has given me a lot more independence that I didn't think I would be able to have.

Facilitator: I'm really glad to see that “Participant A.” I just want to say that's wonderful and I'm glad you kind of pushed past it, out of your comfort zone. Getting past that scary moment, and now riding transit to Ikea just to spend some time wandering around the store. I love it. How about anyone else? Anything to share before I move onto our next question?

Participant C: I agree with “Participant A.” That gave me a lot of independence. I 100% agree with what “Participant A” said.

Who rides transit with you? Are you able to help others because you have a free pass?

Facilitator: Let's talk a little bit about how your free transit pass maybe benefits you, but the people in your life. Let me ask you to raise your hand. Are you riding transit with your brothers or sisters? Raise your hand if you're riding transit with your brothers and sisters. Anybody riding transit with brothers and sisters? Yeah, “Participant G,” I see you turned yours on and “Participant B.” Both of you raised your hand. Can you talk a little bit about if this is a responsibility you have? What is it like to ride the bus with your siblings?

Participant G: I personally like riding the bus with my siblings. Knowing that I have someone with me and someone to talk to and spend the next, I don't know, 45 minutes or 35 minutes on it with them. Yeah, I think it's a good experience. I enjoy it.

Facilitator: That's great. Are your siblings older or younger than you?

Participant G: They are younger.

Facilitator: And so that probably makes your parents feel comfortable that you're with your younger siblings. Do you feel good, that your siblings and your parents feel good about that as well?

Participant G: Yes. They like us sticking together and not us alone and all that.

Facilitator: Thanks that's great. "Participant B," how about you and sharing rides with your siblings?

Participant B: I enjoy that. It keeps me company and makes me feel safer. And then like, they're younger, so I keep an eye on them because I don't want them going anywhere where they shouldn't be going.

Facilitator: Yeah. Thanks for sharing. Let me just look at this from another direction. When we were talking with some youth, they were talking about some responsibilities they had for other members of their family. So, after school, some folks are using their transit pass maybe to get to their grandparents to help with their evening meal, or to an aunty to help out with some things that she needs around the house. Are any of you able to help others as a result of the pass? We can expand this to volunteer work you might be doing in the community that you're using transit. Anybody helping others as a result of that pass?

Participant F: I am not sure if this constitutes to it, since I am going to college and I don't have a car here. Usually, most college kids here use Uber, and they pay for it to get around or sometimes they'll pay other people for gas prices to borrow and ride along with them. So being able to use the free transit and being able to relieve my parents of that burden and not have to pay additional fees has really helped them.

Facilitator: Thanks for adding that in, "Participant F." I'll ask a little bit more about that in just a minute. Anybody else?

Participant H: Not really family members. I volunteer at the Jacobs and Cushman Center. And just whenever I have volunteer events that I need to go to, I'll take public transit.

Participant D: I just want to add that I volunteer at the Jewish Family Center in the past. It's a wonderful organization. I have only praise for them.

Does the free youth pass save your family money? Did you ride transit before it was free? Did you pay for the pass using your own money? How have you and your family used that extra money?

Participant D: Yeah so, before the youth opportunity pass, I would pay it for the regular pass myself. Right now, I am actually saving enough money to be able to move out of my parents' home because I already graduated high school and, in a few months, I am beginning my new life that I am looking forward to.

Participant G: I get my pass from school. They give it out for free for anyone who needs it. Take the trolley and all that. A lot of kids from my school take the bus to Old Town Trolley Station to take the trolley from there. So they give it out for free, and it does save money for my parents so they don't have to pick me or my siblings up. So we can go from there.

Participant C: My school did the same thing. They just made sure everyone has it. My mom uses that extra money to save or buy stuff for the house, uses it to buy groceries and stuff.

Participant F: Since I'm like saving money on the pass and Ubering, I usually use the money for weekends for groceries. And whatever money is left, usually, my parents are saving it because my brother is also going to go to college soon.

Facilitator: Does anyone else want to add anything else about sort of the cost of the pass, the fact that it's free and how we're, we're saving that money? Thanks so much for that, "Participant F."

Has your family been less stressed because you have access to free transit?

Facilitator: You know, we were talking about your family and how this these passes are, are impacting your family. And many youth are telling us that their families are just less stressed. And we talked about this a little bit. But you know, raise your hand for me if you feel that your family has less stress and less worry, because you have the free transit pass. Yeah, so I'm seeing the majority of you are raising the hand, let me have a few of you chat through this. "Participant E," can you talk to me a little bit about how your family's less stressed.

Participant E: On "Participant E's" behalf as his mother, I appreciated his ability to participate in activities with his friends, either during the summer or off times from school, or even on weekends, and that they can go, they could go to the beach, they could go to the skate park. Or they could go thrifting. And I didn't have to have to take time off from work to have him be able to do those things.

Facilitator: That's so nice. Thanks for chiming in about that, mom, I appreciate it. Let's, let's go to "Participant F." What do you have to share here about less stress and worry, you kind of talked about that. Anything else that you want to add for me?

Participant F: Well, I'm going to try to be transparent. I know, my parents were a little worried because they haven't seen the transit here. And also because they've heard about people being aggressive on the transit before. So they were, like, a little worried at first, but I had talked to them about how it is and how easy it is because much of, like, everything is connected. I've used buses, I've used trolleys. And I think that's really helped them feel less stressed out. Because at first, they were pretty adamant about using, like, Uber about using, like, paid services just for that safety aspect. But I definitely feel like they feel more relief, knowing that I'm using the transit center and the transit services.

Facilitator: That's great. Thanks for sharing that. I'm glad your parents are feeling more comfortable, especially since you're able to get so many places. "Participant A," how about for you.

Participant A: It's definitely, really taken some of the stress off my family, which is just me and my mom. But when I was little, she would always refer to herself as my taxi because I always had so many places to go, and I know that it made it so that she wasn't always able to do things that she wanted to do because she had already said she would drive me somewhere. So it's, like, I've been able to do those things. Without having to ask her, it's also helped relieve stress, because she doesn't have to take time off work as much if I have, like, a doctor's appointment or something like that. Or if I'm feeling sick from school, I can sign myself out and take the transit home. And she doesn't have to drive the 30 minutes from her work to my school and back and all of that. So it's definitely helped destress her and yeah.

Facilitator: Yeah, that's great. Thanks for sharing. "Participant A," I'm glad that you and your mom are really seeing the benefits. Does anyone else want to talk a little bit more about how your family or yourself. How you're feeling less stressed now that you have the transit pass?

Participant G: I feel like it is a lot less stress on my parents knowing that they don't have to drive down to my school to pick me and my siblings up and then don't have to worry about that after working. They don't have to get off work a little earlier than they usually do. So they can still make money and all that. And I just feel like it's a lot more simple and easy. And like "Participant F" said, I know my mom was a little worried. And, like, she was—she didn't—she wasn't a fan of the idea about transit and all that. Knowing that it's, like, public and anyone could get on it and, like, some stuff that she's heard, but knowing that me and my siblings

are going to stay together no matter what we have. Like knowing that we're going to be together, and we're not going to be alone. It did make her feel more comfortable.

Facilitator: Thanks for that. Anyone else? Did I see somebody open a mic?

Participant C: My mom feels a bit better. So she doesn't have to drive me everywhere now. So like, if I wanted to hang out with a friend, I can just, like, take the transit or whatever over to their house or take the bus over their house. So like, relieves the stress of my mom having to pay for gas all the time to just take me places.

Do you have plans to ride transit in the future?

Facilitator: That's great, "Participant C." Thanks for adding that in. Okay, let's go. Let's go to the I think our next question here is just sort of open ended, right? It's talking a little bit about do you have, you know, plans to use transit in the future. And I think some of you chatting about, you know, how your mom felt, you know, if you've kind of put yourself into growing into that adult and becoming the mom yourself. It looks like a bunch of hands went up. So it looks like I'm seeing the majority of you're looking to ride transit in the future. Does anybody want to talk about that with me? "Participant D," anything that you want to share about? Kind of your future transit use?

Participant D: Yeah, for sure. So I'm definitely going to continue using transit to get to my job. And in the summer, a couple of my friends are coming back to San Diego for the summer. So I'm definitely gonna use that, to go see them and go with them.

Facilitator: Look forward to hearing about those reunions. Anybody else? How about "Participant B," you want to share a little bit with us about your future plans?

Participant B: Yeah. I think in the future, I might use it to go to like a Padres game or something. The trolley because that's very convenient.

Facilitator: Yeah, it is very convenient. And we have an awesome team with the Padres. Right. So that sounds good. I saw some people, go ahead, "Participant A," I see you putting your hand up. Doing the digital hand.

Participant A: I was actually talking with my girlfriend about this recently. She's been very nervous to start learning how to use public transportation. And she currently lives in Coronado. But over the summer, she's going to be moving out of Coronado, and she doesn't have a driver's license yet, either. So I'm going to teach her how to use public transportation and she's going to also use the youth opportunity pass. And I yeah, I don't know when I am getting my license. Or if I want to, because I feel like I can get to most places pretty easily while taking transit, so I don't really have any plans to stop.

Facilitator: Yeah, that's great. And I'm so glad you're bringing someone else into the fold. I think it'd be wonderful for you to kind of show her the ropes there. Thanks for sharing that. "Participant A". I really appreciate it. How about "Participant H," did you want to share anything here about your future plans?

Participant H: Yeah, just, like, over the summer, going to the gym or just getting around town. Makes it a lot easier to set up, you know, having to call a taxi or what have you.

Facilitator: Very good. Okay, that sounds great. Thanks. Anybody else? Did somebody start to say something? I didn't mean to speak over.

Participant F: I was just going to say, I did hear that it got passed that they're going to let 19 to 24 ride for free. I'm not sure when it goes into effect. Um, but definitely since I'm, I'm a

nursing major. So I'm going to be doing clinicals and a lot of hospitals are also on the paths, for trolleys and for buses, which is really convenient.

Facilitator: Yeah, that's wonderful. I'm so glad that you can access the hospitals and places you'll be, you know, looking to work or doing internships. That's great. And "Participant C," did you want to add anything to this chat about future plans?

Participant C: I mean, yes, I going to be a senior next year. I'm going to be taking the trolley a lot more to school and back from school and stuff. Because like, I'll be, like, 17 turning 18 soon. My mom is still dragging me everywhere when I'm, like, almost an adult.

Facilitator: That's right. Okay. So I can see that, you know, getting a little bit of independence is, is kind of high on many of our lists. Let me just ask you guys to shape this question a little bit differently. You know, "Participant A" was talking to us about working with her friend and her girlfriend to train her to how to use transit. You know, maybe let's become a little bit older adult, perhaps you're starting families. Do you think that as you, you know, grow into adulthood? You know, with your own families and jobs and stuff. Do you still see yourself?

Participant D: Yeah, I mean I'm definitely with "Facilitator" that I'm not going to have kids at this age. But no for transit, when feasible, I can totally see myself using public transit because it's way it's convenient. And it's just, it's just a very good thing to have.

Facilitator: Yeah, thanks, "Participant D." Anybody else [like to] go? Yeah, "Participant A."

Participant A: I am really passionate about, like, climate change and things like that. And so using public transportation and rideshare and buses is, like, better. And I know that the MTS is working on having like electric buses and things like that. So I definitely plan on using it going forward to try and be more climate conscious because I don't, I definitely don't want kids, but I will continue to use it.

Participant A: I took my dog on the bus. One time she hated that. I did. She didn't like it. It was too loud for her. But I did take her.

Participant F: Oh, definitely. I am. I'm so excited about it already. I've gotten some of my friends at college to come with me places because they're, like, "oh, I don't want to pay for it." It's, like, you know, going and coming back. And I'm, like, no, it's free. You can just sign up, and I walked them through the process, had them call in, and all that. And a lot of people, they're really happy with it. And I'm, I definitely want to use it in the future. I love it. Especially in, like, Riverside. I think they're just starting up some transit here and there. But it's not as diverse as San Diego. And being in a city and moving to a city where that's much more common was really helpful, like, just getting into the groove of things.

Facilitator: Yeah. Good. I'm really glad to hear that in the group. Anyone else? How about "Participant C?"

Participant C: I want to eventually teach my sister how to, you know, take the transit places. I mean, she's getting a bit older. And since I don't really, like, not only see her that often. I want to at least be able to teach her how to take that places so she can, like, get places and maybe, like, get to school if she ever needs to and stuff like that.

Facilitator: A great big sister way to look at that. Thanks for sharing, "Participant C." "Participant G" didn't, yeah, I don't think we've heard from "Participant G" on this.

Participant G: I also agree with "Participant C." I want to teach my younger sibling how to use it. And I think she would actually like it a lot. I know. She's, she's been on a, like, a few times with me and one of my other older siblings, but she hasn't been on in a while. But I

know that she would like it when she's, like, older. She wants to go to the mall or whatever, and she'll know how to do that.

Anything else you want to share about the free youth pass? Any other comments about your experience riding transit?

Facilitator: Thanks for that, “Participant G.” Thanks, everyone. And, you know, we just want to kind of open it up here. You know, is there anything else that you want to share about the free youth pass or about your experience riding transit. Does anybody want to share, you know, any other insights or comments, ways that this has benefited you or your family?

Participant G: It has helped a lot with parents saving, like, gas money with me being able to hang out friends whenever I want, whenever, and wherever I want. And I enjoyed it a lot, and it's just a really good, like, system. And especially the fact that I could, like, just go like if I want to do more. Like, I could just easily go to the mall, like, I know where to go. I know a bus to take, I know how to get to school and from school taking it. So it's just helped a lot. And I, like, really appreciate the transit.

Participant C: I know, it's just very useful to get places in general, especially since it's free. Me personally, I don't take it to school that much. I will most definitely be next year, but almost, like, almost my entire class takes the bus to school. Majority of my school takes the bus to school when there is that strike going on. Almost a lot of them were not there. Or were really late to class because there's a whole strike thing that they were doing. So I know, it's just very useful for, like, a whole bunch of people. And since it's free, it's just all the more helpful. And I mean, I can get places I could be going probably a lot of places with my friends over the summer—just taking the transit to get anywhere. So I just want to say it's, like, it was really useful in general.

Participant D: This is, this is a bunch of my personal opinions here. But I'm, I am a firm believer in socialists. I totally do believe, and I truly do believe that it should be accessible and in reach for everyone, no matter who they are. I feel it will be a utility to those who and who aren't in the privilege. And I just, I just will say to be wise for all of our inhabitants.

Participant H: It's been really nice just to be able to get everywhere, like, to and from just any events that I have, or, you know, going climbing with friends, or just, you know, for whatever I need to do. It's been nice to have, you know, be able to do that without forking over 20 bucks for an Uber.

Facilitator: Yeah, that's great. So I'm glad to see that you're, you don't, we're out doing, you know, having different adventures and doing different things. Does anybody want to talk? And we'll wrap up here? Fairly soon. But what about your experience riding transit? We talked about the benefits of the past. Are there anything as some of you are new transit, most of you are new transit riders, right. And I think that we've kind of covered that in the sense that you're talking about your independence, and you're liberated and things like that. Any final thoughts on you know, the writing transit, using the paths or the program in general?

Participant A: Riding transit has definitely been an experience, I will say, the positives definitely outweigh the negatives, I mean, with the nature of public transit, transit is that it is public. So I haven't always felt the safest, but it's never like I needed to get off, I was just like, I'm going to sit in a different seat. Um, but it definitely has been, like, positive to have outweighed the negatives and that I'm independent, and that if I need to, I can get off the bus. And if I need to get on another bus, it's not going to cost me twice as much because it's free. So that's definitely been helpful. I know that some of the routes by me are going to be changing soon so I'll have to learn how to like where things go because I'm pretty familiar

with what's over here. So that'll definitely be a change, but I've definitely enjoyed it. It's just been such a just it made my life my like quality of life so much better because I'm not stuck at home all the time relying on rides from other people.

Participant C: There's definitely been some interesting people on the transit, but I mean, it does the job. It's free. You get where you need to go. Yeah, no, I just move like what "Participant A," like, said, if someone is weird, you just move to a different seat, like, like, you're going to be, like, losing any money if you get off anyway.

Participant G: Just wanted to add to that. I'm saying that. Yeah, if you do, like, if there's a situation going on to the trolley with someone you could easily just move to a different seat or just move to a whole new trolley car.

Participant D: Yes, so the only thing you have to add is please add more stops to the Del Mar area. And areas up North that would be the best for me and the greatest convenience. Thank you.

Participant F: I was going to say maybe, I don't know. There's probably better places. But I know that I do realize the QR code but since like this, the QR scanning stations are in the sun. Sometimes it takes, like, five or six minutes to get it to scan. So I was going to get one of those cards, but I think you can only get it from the downtown station, correct? They can get a little complicated. But I think other than that, I really love the program.

May 10 Focus Group

Participant A: 16 years old, East County

Participant B: 17 years old, North County West

Participant C: 13 years old, Central San Diego

Participant D: 16 years old, North City

Participant E: 16 years old, Central San Diego

Participant F: 14 years old, Central San Diego

Participant G: 15 years old, South Suburban

Participant H: 15 years old, North City

Where do you take transit? School? Work/Internship? Personal appointments? After school activities?

Participant F: Yeah, my school is High Tech High. It's around the Liberty Station area, so, I have to take the bus to the trolley station and then the trolley station to Middletown to get home.

Facilitator: Were you taking transit before this program?

Participant F: Yes, I was.

Participant E: Yes, I take it to school, to downtown by San Diego High School

Participant H: I live in City Heights in the Euclid Area

Participant B: I wouldn't say work, but an internship. I got offered an opportunity to go to a class at UCSD, so I use public transportation and to get down there every single Wednesday. When I did work at Rubio's, I did often take the bus.

Facilitator: Was that before the program or after?

Participant B: It was in between the program. I was using transportation, my job before Rubio's, and then I got the Rubio's job, and then I started using as well.

Participant G: I play roller hockey, but we don't have a rink at my school. So we practice at another school in our district. And so it's a little bit further out, but there's a bus station by there. So I usually take the bus there and back.

Facilitator: You go with some of your teammates?

Participant G: Usually just me, a lot of my friends drive.

Participant A: I don't have any extracurriculars. But I do use it to go to kind of like cafes to study when basically they kick everyone off campus for school. So fine, like, hang out with people.

Participant B: I am involved in, like, speech and debate and then mock trial. We often have, like, tournaments that are all around San Diego. So that's helped a lot. And often I have a lot of afterschool practices. So usually after school, if I'm not going with friends or anything like that. I also think using buses to go study at certain cafes.

Participant D: My friends and I use it to get around to places like we'll go to UTC and then from there, we can go to our houses and stuff like that. So we can go around pretty quickly. And it's all free.

Participant C: Sometimes me and my family go take the trolley to some of the San Diego State games like the soccer team and the football games.

Participant F: Sometimes, I'll meet up with friends or family to eat out at a restaurant maybe in downtown or somewhere else, and I use the trolley or bus to get there.

Participant G: My family is big on the Padres. So whenever we go to a Padres game, we usually take the bus up to downtown, and then I used to go to the gym a lot. So I take the bus there, and sometimes the library or see friends and stuff like that.

Participant A: Mostly friends, or when I'm going to Ocean Beach or just in general to their people's houses.

Participant G: I feel like it's very freeing because I feel like it gives me a lot more opportunities to do things or maybe, like, see people I normally wouldn't get. In other situations, I'd probably be relying on other people to maybe get a chance at doing these things. It's convenient and consistent. I know I always have an opportunity to do something if I need it.

Participant B: I found out about this program because of my status as an unaccompanied minor. It was kind of like a lifeline when it came to that when I didn't have friends to offer me rides. It was, like, it was very, very helpful so I didn't have to worry about getting to places.

Who rides transit with you? Are you able to help others because you have a free pass?

Participant E: My little brother.

Participant G: I actually ride with my older sister because she's at UCSD right now, so she gets a free pass through her school, I believe. Whenever she comes back down to Chula Vista, normally we ride together, and we go around places.

Participant E: My mom and brother take the bus. My mom takes it to work.

Participant A: I live next to a stop and not everyone lives near me. Everyone lives within one, like, trolley stop and then we can go from there. For example, to Ocean Beach or to other places, and make, like, day trips or something.

Participant F: Yes. It's kind of like before how I just take the bus with my friends. If I want to meet up at their house or if I want to, like, hang out and eat somewhere with them.

Participant G: I volunteered for a living post every now and again. It's an aquarium place. It's up north for quite a bit though. So it's not really reasonable for me to drive there all the time. So sometimes I'll take the bus up there. Also, I tutor at my school but normally, like, runs late, so I'll take the bus back sometimes.

Participant B: I volunteer at the Agua Hedionda Discovery Center. It's nearby school. So it's, like, very easy access with public transportation.

Participant F: I help my parents because well, like, financially because before the youth free pass, they'd always kind of, like, stress about having to pay, like, monthly payments [for] my pass. Now it is one less thing for them to worry about.

Does the free youth pass save your family money? Did you ride transit before it was free? Did you pay for it using your own money? How have you and your family used that extra money?

Participant C: My family has used the extra money just to go out to some other places, like out to eat.

Participant D: It's definitely useful to have a little bit more money because we don't have to pay for the pass. It can go towards other things like gas, because that's pretty expensive now. But I think, even if it did go back to costing money, I think my family would still probably be paying for it. Because it's just it's really practical for me to be able to get the school with it.

Participant A: When I started using the pass, I started using it steadily because it was free. But before that, I still did use it. But it wasn't like going to school, I was biking to school or it was to have fun with my friends. I wasn't my parents who paid for it, I was paying for the pass. Personally, I have more money to spend on other things.

Participant B: I definitely did use public transportation to get to work and stuff, but it was more sporadic. I guess I wasn't as informed of the places I could go, especially within my community, because there's not a lot of information about it. It wasn't until, like, this program was emailed to my entire school, that I was able to get access to it. It saved me money, because I'm independent. It's just like in various different ways in my life, so I can't really pinpoint one thing but it like it definitely helped me mentally.

Participant H: Well, me having the free pass has affected my family as in, I can go out and go buy my own clothes, and I don't have to burden my family with having to drive me over. They have their own time, to do their own stuff. While I'm over there, getting my clothes, getting my food, getting supplies for myself, or even just having fun on my own. The independence has helped me grow as a person as well, and I'm thankful for the program.

Has your family been less stressed because you have access to free transit?

Participant C: They've trusted the transit more than they did before because it was easier for them to afford, and they felt safer about it.

Facilitator: How did they end up feeling safer about it just from you using it more?

Participant C: Using it more and they also have used it before, so they feel like they can trust it.

Participant G: I have a lot of anxiety about being on time to things. So I feel like this really helped because it's so consistent. I know I don't have to worry about, like, "Oh, can my friend give me a ride? Do I have to walk there? Like that sort of planning thing?" I feel like it's very convenient to be able to have this as, like, a backup or just, like, to plan on this because I know it's always going to be consistent. And then with my family, I'm a little bit bad about responding to my text. So sometimes, when I parents are asking, where are you? I feel like there's a little less stress on them. Because they know I'm going to have away home.

Participant F: One less thing to worry about. If I did go back to paying, it wouldn't be that much of a deal. But like, wouldn't be that stressful, but, like, it's still just convenient because you know, it's free.

Facilitator: How does your family feel now that you have access to free rides home by transit?

Participant F: They said they like the MTS system more. They trust it more.

Participant E: It felt less stress and ways to go places.

Facilitator: What were you doing? Like before the program?

Participant E: Paying and relying on friends.

Participant A: I'd say in general, about family and not having to ask my family for rides. Because, like, seeing them think, like, more stressed out because there's another thing to worry about. Because time is really precious to my parents, no matter what happens. In case all else fails, I can just take the bus back.

Participant G: One time I got sick at school, and my mom had to come get me. So I could have taken the bus because there is a bus stop close to my school. I don't take it consistently. But if I had known about it, I could have taken the bus, but my mom had to come get me.

Participant A: So personally, my mom works nights. So anytime I wanted a ride home, I have to, like, to say, like, "Hey, can you give me a ride?" She was consistently losing sleep by giving me rides to places. When this program started, she didn't have to worry about it.

Do you have plans to ride transit in the future?

Participant F: I'm doing, like, my driver's ed right now. In the future, like, I plan to use a car. At times, if I won't, like, if I don't have my car, then I'll use the bus or trolley.

Participant B: I'll still be using transportation after I age out of the program. I think that I have enough time to save for a car and everything, especially in like San Diego. If you're in Carlsbad, or like near Carlsbad, it's easier to get downtown by using public transportation, instead of like taking your car. And then next year, I'll be living in the Los Angeles area. I know it's easier often and cheaper. And, like, sometimes safer to use public transportation instead of using your own vehicle.

Participant G: I try to use public transit as much as possible. I do have my license right now but it's more convenient. I don't particularly like driving, so public transit is appealing to me. I'm trying to get a summer job this summer. I'm going to be using public transit for that.

Facilitator: Would you say it just like feels less stressful? Or, like, what is it about it that makes you want to ride transit more?

Participant G: Yeah, I'd say it's just less stressful, more convenient. It's one less thing you have to worry about.

Participant A: I definitely plan to use transit even until, like, my mid to late 20s. Because one, cars are expensive and I'm thinking I'm not going to have time to or, like, the ability to save up for a car. Also, that it is nicer for our planet to take public transit. Knowing that that's a factor. And what also, like, knowing or maybe living in big cities for a while. So, like, I love let's say, San Diego, but I'd also like to go live in Chicago for a time, I took a trip there. And their public transit was really nice. And just in general, like, yeah, public transit is good, I guess.

Participant D: I just think that, obviously, it's good for me to go to school and stuff. But there's a lot of other places where it doesn't necessarily draw me, like, have a stop. That's going to be where I need to be. While it can be pretty consistent, there's also pretty big breaks between, like, bus times, for example. So there have been times where I've tried to take the bus with some friends, and we're at the stop for 20 minutes or something like that, because we might have gotten there right after the initial bus left. And so then it can be kind of impractical, because we just kind of have to wait for another bus to come.

Participant E: Just for my own safety? Because there's a lot of homeless people on the trolley and that stuff.

Facilitator: Do you think that you're going to be taking the bus or the trolley once you're over 18?

Participant H: I'll still take it as long as I don't have a car. Once I have a car, I'll probably use it less. I'll still use it as a means of transportation when I have to use a car. For sure. We were just talking about people's plans to ride public transit in the future.

Facilitator: Do you want to tell the group a little bit about the types of places you're taking transit?

Participant H: I've gone all around San Diego, I've been from Ocean Beach, La Jolla. Downtown. I've been to basically everywhere except more down to the South because there's less access to the trolley. So I go more to the northern areas near the beach, because I like going to the beach.

Facilitator: Who are you normally taking transit with?

Participant H: I take transit with some of my friends. Sometimes I go, I just go alone.

Anything else you want to share about the free youth pass? Any other comments about your experience riding transit?

Participant H: I've had many good and bad experiences on transit, mostly good, especially on quick services. It's an easy way to get around. And it's, like, more seamless, like, I don't see many issues with using the app or using cards. So I enjoy going around everywhere.

Participant B: I guess it's just more about accessibility, because I think my school also likely sends a school wide email. But it wasn't until there were certain school events in downtown San Diego that a lot of kids found out about it. I know that our school has prom in downtown San Diego and many kids took the Coaster to go to prom. And then there were events at Petco Park for, like, baseball games that were accessible to students. And so, I think kids who weren't originally able to get down there because of lack of transportation now had access without having to figure things out or having to ask a friend. So, I think it's just really important for schools, like, to showcase this program.

Participant A: Yeah, definitely, accessibility is big. I took the bus to this support group that I wouldn't normally have been able to reach. Which I thought was really nice and important. Also, I think, community and understanding are, like, having been in one on the same ground, basically, of everyone. So while everyone is like in doing their own like thing, so you get to see different people, they're all on the same bus or trolley is fine now. Definitely good for to encourage. To see perspectives of people with how people live.

Participant G: For me, I think it's mostly about like, the, like, community, I guess you get from it. Like a lot of these people, I've met because I've been able to go on the bus. All these opportunities I've had, these connections I made are only because I've had this opportunity through this time. So I feel like it's very much like, connecting, connecting people and opportunities, I guess, like all these things, like people I've met, I wouldn't have had without this.

Participant A: I think it makes kids appreciate California and San Diego a lot more. With this pass, you can go almost anywhere. I find some kids, like, don't appreciate it as much at all, just like I know staying one place. But being able to, like, to branch out as much as you want and, like, having the ability to go out. I think it will one, like, encourage people to appreciate and stay in California if they are able to, but also, like, I don't know want to invest in the community in all the different communities that are covered by the transit system. Yeah, just exploring more have more access.

Participant G: Yeah, I just wanted to add to that I feel like I definitely related with that idea with being able to explore more. like, I feel like now that I've had this pass, I've been definitely going out more. I feel like I've learned a lot about our city in general. Like there's so many opportunities and like community functions that I didn't really know about or really have access to before this, so it was really, like, eye opening, I guess to see, like, all this stuff that's going around me that I hadn't realized before now.

Participant D: I think it's really helpful because it makes it really simple to just get to school, there's no need to have to drive or anything, just walk to the bus stop and take the bus. And it's completely free. I think that's about it.

Participant C: I just liked how it was really easy. All I had to do is really tap the card, and it's done. That's it. And I found that really convenient for me and my family.

Participant E: It's easy. Free.

Participant G: I sort of already mentioned this, but I'm going up to the living coast, which is quite a bit north. For me. That's something I'd wanted to volunteer there for a while. And I'd gone there a few times when I was little. And that's what made me want to, like start volunteering there. But that wasn't really possible for me until this program, because driving there isn't, like, reasonable for me to go there every time. So, it's really nice to know that I can have this opportunity with the pass.

May 13 Focus Group

Participant A: 16 years old, South Suburban

Participant B: 15 years old, East County

Participant C: 18 years old, South Suburban

Participant D: 18 years old, North County West

Participant E: 15 years old, North County East

Participant F: 14 years old, East County

***Where do you take transit? School? Work/internship? Personal appointment?
Afterschool activities?***

Facilitator: And so my first question for you, raise your hand, if you take transit if you ride the bus, the train or the trolley to school. I see “Participants A, E, B, and F” all taking transit to school. You know, I'm looking at the ages, some of the folks on the call here. I'm thinking maybe some of you are working already. Do any of you have a job or an internship? If so, are you taking transit to get to work or to an internship? I see “Participants A and D” have raised their hand. “Participant A,” can you do you feel comfortable chatting with me a little bit about where you're working and, you know, maybe the times that you're jumping on transit to get to work.

Participant A: So I'm currently doing an internship because it's a requirement to graduate high school at my school. So I just take the trolley around. I want to say sometimes I spend the night at, like, TJ with my mom because my grandma has a house down here. And recently, I've been taking the trolley from San Ysidro around 8:20. And I take it all the way to Park and Market, which is in downtown. So I arrived there around 9:25. And then from there, I ride along with my mentor, all the way up to around Kearny Mesa, and then I take the trolley again, around five, to head back.

Facilitator: Well, that's quite a journey. Were you working before you had the youth opportunity pass? Or did you just start that internship this year?

Participant A: No, the internship is just for juniors. So it's just, like, a month you get that you do the internship.

Facilitator: Yeah, thanks so much. That is really interesting to me. I'm so glad you shared that. Let me hear from “Participant D.” I think you raised your hand. Are you working? Are you doing an internship?

Participant D: Yeah, I have a job, and I've taken the bus.

Facilitator: Okay, great. And so are you taking the bus to a different community? I forgot. Were you the one in Encinitas?

Participant D: Sorry, yeah, Encinitas. I haven't taken it far. Just the next City over.

Facilitator: Okay, perfect. Yeah, I really appreciate you. Let's go to our next question. How about taking transit to make any errands. You know, this or that you were thinking about? Have you jumped on the trolley or taken a bus or a train to maybe go to a grocery store? You know, any personal appointments? Raise your hand if you've used the trolley or the or the bus to get to a personal appointment. Great. Thanks so much. “Participant C,” would you mind sharing a little bit about the type of errands that you've run or personal appointment?

Participant C: Well, usually what I do is I just use the I use the public transit to just do kind of everything. I go to the grocery store, or I go get something to eat, or I go buy clothing whenever I need to. Just stuff like that.

Facilitator: Perfect. Thanks so much for adding those comments. How about “Participant F?” How about for you? What kind of personal errands are you running?

Participant F: I use it to, like, get clothes and stuff. Like, I take the buses and trolleys and stuff to get to malls or, like, the Walgreens or whatever to go to the doctor, whatever.

Facilitator: Perfect, really appreciate you sharing that. “Participant E,” was there something that you can add about your personal errands?

Participant E: I've used the train a couple of times to go to the doctor's because I fractured my wrist a couple of months ago. So just to get that checked.

Facilitator: Yeah, so when you when you went on that doctor's appointment, sorry about your wrists, hope it's still on better? Was that an appointment that you were able to get to by yourself? Or did one of your parents ride with you?

Participant E: I took the train to a parking lot. And then my mom picked me up from that parking lot, and then took me to the actual doctors.

Facilitator: Okay, that's great. I really liked that insight. So this is likely, you know, your youth passes, really helping your family, you know, save time because you're able to get closer to where mom's located, right? And then do you finish that errand and her car. I wanted to check a little bit about, you know, maybe some after school activities. And raise your hand if you've done some after school activities if you reach those by taking transit. Okay, great. So I see a number of folks, let's go to "Participant E." What about after school activities? What kind of after school activities are you doing?

Participant E: I'm on my school's football team and, like, two months ago, I was on the basketball team, but that season's over. So, I've just used it to get from my house to the school, practice and then come back.

Facilitator: Great. I appreciate that. How about "Participant F?" How about for you? What about after school activities.

Participant F: I use it to go to my soccer practice, and then I go to after school tutoring.

Facilitator: Thanks so much for sharing that, "Participant F." I think "Participant B," do you want to share a little bit about after school activities here?

Participant B: I skate. So, I use the bus and trolley a lot to get to different places to, like, find skate spots and stuff.

Facilitator: Nice. I like that very much. And I think, did I get everybody on this deck, "Participant D," do you want to share a little bit about some afterschool activities.

Participant D: Sure, I've taken it just for fun to just go down to, like, downtown. And my brother uses it a lot for his water polo practice. So, like, take it up to Carlsbad and then to the pool.

Facilitator: I want to back up and ask one more question. I just want to ask students to raise their hand if you've been able to get to somewhere that you have never been before or that's unique. Are there any kind of unique places that you've been able to get to?

Participant F: I go to PB and OB a lot with friends, or sometimes I'll take the Coaster to go see friends.

Facilitator: Perfect, great. I love that you have the friends spread out and we can help you connect with those folks first. "Participant C," how about for you?

Participant C: Well, for me, personally, I just, I get to see my friends get to go a lot more places with this public transport, like, since I live down here in Chula Vista, it is a little easier for me to get up to Otay Ranch to go to the mall over there. With all my friends like usually after school, that's like something we do go to the mall.

Facilitator: Yeah, that's great. I love that, you know, this is really connecting you to the places that you need to go. "Participant D," do you want to share anything here about unique places.

Participant D: I like biking. So I've taken the train almost every stop and just biked as far east as possible, and then back. So yeah, I've used it a couple of times to go there.

Facilitator: Yeah, that's great. I'm glad to do that. How's your experience traveling with the bike on the train?

Participant D: It's really good. Usually, the only time I've had difficulty is when there's, like, a Padres game. And everybody's, like, tons of bikes on there. But almost every time there's, like, there's enough space. I don't have to put it where it's not supposed to, like, in the little slots.

Who rides transit with you? Are you able to help others because you have access to free transit?

Facilitator: My first question is, are any of you taking transit with your siblings with your brothers and sisters? Raise your hand if you're riding transit with your brothers and sisters. Yeah. And so, I can see that this is really impactful to families. Can anyone chat with me a little bit? You know, I can start with you again, if you're okay with that? Are your siblings younger than you that you're riding with or older? Can you chat with me a little bit about your siblings?

Participant F: So I have my older brother and sister, and sometimes my niece and I take the trolley. Yeah, usually it's me and my eldest sister coming home from school.

Facilitator: Thanks for adding that, "Participant F". Appreciate it. How about "Participant E," when you're traveling with your siblings.

Participant E: I have a little brother that I've taken the bus with a couple of times to just go hang out. So we've taken it, like, to downtown Vista and just hung out.

Facilitator: How do you think that makes your little brother feel when he can hop on the on the trolley with you and go explore like that.

Participant E: Probably makes him feel good because we don't really go out that often.

Facilitator: Yeah, you know, little brothers on a whole look up to their big brother. So I'm so glad you're taking him places and you're using transit to do that. Let me hear from "Participant D." How about you with your siblings?

Participant D: I've taken my brother and just like done biking, rode with my friends together and gone to, like, downtown and walked around.

Facilitator: Great. Yeah. Downtown's an interesting area to explore. The question says, are you able to help others because you have a free transit pass. And let me just put some context around this a bit. We heard during the surveys that some youth are taking transit after school, maybe to their grandparents, or to an older aunt's house, you know, perhaps helping with meal planning or getting, you know, making sure grandma and grandpa have everything they need for the day? Are any of you doing things like that? I also want to ask about any volunteer work that you might be doing in the community. So raise your hand if there's you know, another person in your life or any volunteer work that you're doing. Yeah, "Participant F," chat with me a little bit here about who else you're able to help out?

Participant F: I'd take the bus to go do food distribution.

Facilitator: Oh, good. Alright, so are you coordinating that with like one of the centers?

Participant F: Yeah, I do it over here and go. And yeah.

Facilitator: Yeah, that's awesome. I'm so glad you do that. It's just an important part to, you know, contribute to the community. How about for you, "Participant B?"

Participant B: Every now and then, I do volunteer stuff. So it definitely helps me get around like this summer, I'm gonna be doing this little camping trip that my school does for incoming freshmen. And so it really helps me get around to those places.

Facilitator: Awesome. Yeah. Good. I'm glad you're welcoming those freshmen in as well. "Participant B," thanks for that. Really appreciate you guys chiming in there.

Does the free youth pass save your family money? Did you ride transit before it was free? Did you pay for the pass using your own money? How have you and your family used that extra money?

Facilitator: We want to learn a little bit more about any money savings that you or your family may have. And so one of the first questions that I want you to raise your hand, did you ride transit before it was free? So raise your hand if you rode transit before it was free? Okay, good. So I'm seeing most of you. So "Participants F, A, B, and D," all saying that you rode transit before it was free. So then I might assume that for "Participants E and C?" Was it the past that really kind of motivated you to start using transit? So I'm going to kind of do a reverse here for "Participants E and C." If you didn't ride transit before, can you chat with me? Maybe "Participant C" a little bit about, you know, what got you interested in riding transit?

Participant C: I started riding transit recently, just by sheer coincidence, I just had the necessity to start riding transit. I didn't write it before because I didn't need to. And that was just before it was free. I started riding it when it was free. Just by pure coincidence. Nothing really motivated me.

Facilitator: Okay, good. Yeah. Thanks for chiming in there. Let me just check with "Participant E." I think you hadn't ridden transit before the pass?

Participant E: No, I haven't. I used to walk to school. Back when I was in middle school because it was like close. I could just walk. But my high school is a little further, and this was my first year. So the bus pass really helped me get from there from my house to school without having my mom go out of her way.

Facilitator: Yeah, how long is that? How long? Is it taking you to get to school?

Participant E: Not too long. Like, it's like 20 minutes.

Facilitator: Perfect. Good. I like that. That's great. Yeah, I really appreciate that. I just want to double check with the folks that were riding transit before you had the free youth pass. Does anybody want to chime in on how that free pass maybe, you know, allowed you to explore more or do things differently?

Participant D: Before I would just like stay in my own city and just like, stay around there with friends. That mean it was free. So I just like would go anywhere. The train would go, I guess.

Facilitator: So here I'm looking for some comments around you know, now that the pass is free, how have you used that extra money? So here you know, I'm thinking that families maybe they have, you know, groceries or rent or utilities? Or maybe you've been able to save

for college or vacation? Yeah, “Participant B,” you raised your hand talk to me a little bit about saving money.

Participant B: It's definitely helped us save on gas, because I didn't want to move to a new school here in Lakeside, just because I grew up there with all my friends and stuff are there. I have more opportunities down there. So it definitely helps us save on gas from having to drive down to San Diego. And then wherever I forgot area, say City Heights area. And then over and over every week, five days or however many days a month? Yeah, it definitely saves a lot of money. And then with the transit pass, at first, it didn't seem like a lot. But within only like a month of having used it when it was still wasn't free yet, it did build up. So now that it is free. It did definitely help us with having more money for other stuff.

Facilitator: Yeah, I appreciate you chiming in there. So are you taking the bus to get back to your old high school and City Heights?

Participant B: Yeah. Yeah.

Facilitator: How long has that taken you from Lakeside?

Participant B: It takes about 20 minutes on the trolley and like a 10-15 minute drive on the bus. So in total about 40 minutes to an hour depending on traffic.

Facilitator: Yeah. Okay. Well, I'm glad you're back at your school. Are you a senior this year or junior?

Participant B: This year right now? I'm a sophomore, but next year?

Facilitator: Well, I'm glad that transit is really helping you get connected. Let's talk to “Participant A”. Do you have any insights for us about the extra money from the pass?

Participant A: I take the trolley along with two other buses and this was like on a daily. So it's just more of like, the money I have for myself. So like, if I go out and need anything, it's like the money I have for myself. So more or less, it's that money is now actually going to me. Well, it was going to me before. But it's, like, it's not wasted as quickly. And I have money in case of an emergency when I'm out. So yeah, it's helped me save money in that way.

Facilitator: Yeah, I like that kind of, you know, you might call it a contingency plan and you have some money for emergencies. When you're out. Are you also able to, you know, maybe buy new clothes or books or records, those types of things.

Participant A: Yeah, I'm just, like, the money that I saved now from that is more of, like, when I go out with friends, or, like, we go on a trip, and I want to buy just things like my own expenses.

Facilitator: That's good. I like that. I'm glad you shared that “Participant A,” thanks so much for doing that.

Has your family been less stressed because you have free transit?

Facilitator: You know, let's shift gears here and we're going to go from money to stress. Let's go to the next question here. When students like you all completed our survey, a lot of them were really chiming in about how the youth opportunity pass has reduced stress or reduced worry, but also reduce stress for their family. Can you raise your hand if you think that's true if you align with this thought that your family is less stressed because of the free pass? Anybody agree with that thought? Yeah, raise your hand if you feel that your family is kind of less stress, because you have the pass and I'm thinking about some of you that were riding

with your siblings earlier, you know, perhaps that the point of less stress. "Participant B," can you talk to me a little bit about maybe how the family has less worry or stress.

Participant B: So when my mom would take me to school towards the beginning of the school year, sometimes she'd worry about, like, being late to work. So she would be stressing over that and then now with the bus pass, she could just drop my brother off, and then go straight to work. And I can just take the bus and go to school.

Facilitator: Right, thanks for sharing that. That's probably super helpful for your mom, "Participant B." "Participant C," how about for you less stress and worry for yourself or the family?

Participant C: Yeah, it's a lot less stressful for me not to have to worry about, you know, having to wake up early to walk to school. It's just a lot better for me to just have the bus there.

Facilitator: So you actually had to get up earlier when you had to walk to school that you're getting up a little bit later. Now that you have the transit pass.

Participant C: Yeah, I am.

Facilitator: Yeah, that's great. Maybe that's just because I'm, I'm always thinking about how little sleep people in your age group get. So I'm glad you can get a few more winks now that you have the free transit pass. How about for you? Less stress and worry for the family?

Participant F: Yeah, my I used to be late to school, like an hour late like every day. So I was like, they like they kept having to call my house and stuff. Yeah, but now with the I get there faster just because they don't have to worry about traffic and stuff. I usually just get on the bus.

Facilitator: Yeah, thanks for thanks. Thanks for sharing that chat. I can see how this can be really beneficial to you and you know, and your parents, how about, "Participant B," for you? Can you chat with me a little bit about how your family may have less stress.

Participant B: It has definitely helped with the driving because taking me down, all the way down to school. It's not as bad but when they drive up, but when it's early in the morning, everyone's trying to get to work and stuff. There's like a huge traffic jam.

Facilitator: The 8 highway?

Participant B: Yeah, it's really bad for that. So because of the trolley was free pass, I can take all that. And then they don't have to worry about getting stuck in that traffic on the way back home. But then it also kind of works the opposite way. Because my mom tends to worry a lot. She's like, "Oh, you don't have to exchange." I don't want to go too far, especially at night. I like to go out my friends and stuff. Movies and always end up getting back at, like, 10. And she doesn't like it when I take it that late. But it's yeah, it's not too bad.

Do you have plans to ride transit in the future?

Facilitator: I just want to talk a little bit about any future plans to ride transit. So raise your hand if you think, you know, as you're getting out of high school, maybe entering into college, going into work force, getting your first apartment and your first dog, right? How many of you think that you will ride transit as you become young, younger adults, or older young people? Yeah, "Participant B," can you talk to me a little bit about kind of what you're thinking when I say that you'll be a transit rider in the future?

Participant B: Hopefully, with college and all that, I want to go to SDSU. Because it's closer, I don't really want to have to go far out and stuff. And there's the trolley station right there. So it would save money for me, going out and stuff since the trolleys right there at the college instead of university, or whatever. Yeah, that have like a car, like, I still want to have a car and all that but, with gas and debt and then college tuition, it's a lot of money. So it would save and helped me with that.

Facilitator: Yeah, yeah, I agree. And you know, gas is super expensive. I think it's under five bucks a gallon right now. But if you all are working at minimum wage jobs, \$15 an hour, like, how much of that goes into your gas. Right. So thanks for sharing that with us. "Participant B," how about "Participant E," do you want to talk about riding transit in the future?

Participant E: I have plans of going to Palomar for my first two years of college, at least, and I could take the train from my nearest transit center. And then there's a stop, like, across the street from the Palomar College. So I could just go right there and then get on it and come home.

Facilitator: Yeah, that's I love how you're thinking about that. Can you answer a question for me "Participant E," do you think that where the trolley is located near Palomar, did that really help drive your decision where you'd go to college that, that you'd have that transit access?

Participant E: Not really, but that's just, like, a helpful part of it being there. Yeah.

Facilitator: A bonus. Yeah. Okay, good. Yeah. Thanks for sharing that. I was just thinking that through, let's talk to "Participant A," about some future plans to ride your transit?

Participant A: I do plan on using it as in, like, how like peers in here have mentioned how they use it to go out with friends and stuff. So I feel like there's just much more than just taking public transit to where you need to tomorrow, like the adventure that comes along with it. So I feel like I will end up using it in the future when I want to go out and it's just like a different alternative I'll have.

Facilitator: Yeah, thanks for that. Thanks so much for chiming in. "Participant A" I'd love to hear from you here on future transit plans.

Participant F: I plan on going to UCSD. I already have to take the bus up there sometimes because that's where my older brother is going. But it's really accessible with the bus and stuff. So I plan on using the bus from wherever I live to get there because there's a stop, like, right in front of the school.

Facilitator: Yeah, that's one great thing about our transit system is we're, you know, near these colleges and universities. "Participant D," chat with me about what you're thinking for future travel.

Participant D: I think I'll probably use it to go to college and since I won't have a car, probably by then with the minimum wage job. I'll save money by just going that way.

Facilitator: Yeah, and you've got your bike as well. Right. So being a biker and learning how to take the bike on transit, it's a fantastic skill that you really, it's a skill that you have "Participant D." So I really liked that.

Anything else you want to share about the free youth pass? Any other comments about your experience riding transit?

Facilitator: I just want to just chat with you anything else that you want to share with us. So you know, any other ways that the past has helped you or your family? You know, anything that you want to share about free pass? Or maybe just riding transit in general? You know, some of you I chatted with a couple of you shared with me about the number of connections that you need to make you were talking about taking the trolley to the bus and maybe even a second bus. You know, I'm just curious does anyone have anything else you want to share about the past and its benefits for you? Or your experience riding transit? "Participant F?"

Participant F: I take two buses and two trolleys to get home. But it's been really helpful because sometimes, like I used to, like sometimes when the credit ran out or something, I wouldn't be able to take the whole thing home and I'd have to like, figure out some other way home from there. And it's really, really useful.

Facilitator: Yeah, that's right. So when you're making those connections out there not having to worry about scraping up another dollar and a quarter, whatever, you need it. That's great. Thanks for adding that. Anybody else? Any thoughts about the past or trend writing transit in general that you want to share?

Participant D: Just thank you to whoever like had the idea to make it free. Because like, yeah, I think I'm speaking for all of us. Like, it just opened up so many more like places we could go.

Facilitator: Yeah, thanks for sharing that. I'm in agreement, I'm just so happy to see all of you able to explore you know, all that the city has to offer and you know, you know, learn and grow as you do that. So you've chatted with me about where you're able to take the bus to the types of appointments that you're able to do and practice ride with friends, go downtown. I want to get to talk to me about how that makes you feel. So I'm looking for, you know, some adjectives that describe you know, how you feel now that you have the youth opportunity pass.

Participant E: Grateful. Yeah, just happy that I can have a ride every morning.

Participant B: Muy bien.

Facilitator: Muchas gracias. Thank you. Anyone else? "Participant C?" Anything you want to add before we drop off?

Participant C: I feel like everyone else has said what we were all thinking.

Facilitator: Yeah, yeah. Thanks for adding that. "Participant A," anything from you?

Participant A: You know, it's more just like relief. Being able to not stress about the money aspect of it.

Facilitator: Yeah. Thanks for that. And let me just see "Participant F," how about for you?

Participant F: It makes me feel like more secure on my way home.

Facilitator: Oh, good. Yeah. I'm glad to hear that. That's nice. Well, team, I am so thankful, as we I think we can move toward wrapping up. Let me just check with "study Project Team member."

Study Project Team member: I would say briefly, if you guys had any complaints, you know, we're trying to get the program keep going, but we're also trying to improve how we do it. So we won't use this against anything or against anyone. But if there were any, like hard, or

sticking points, things that you think it'd be more convenient for people, as we try to improve the program as we go forward? Was there any experiences that you or maybe any of your friends or siblings had that that made it more difficult that we can make easier?

Participant D: Not for me, but when I was trying to get my friends to get the pass, it was kind of difficult to set it up for, like, the youth because you know you have to take it from the adult. Yeah, be like call them to get it switched back to a kid account. A couple of my friends are having trouble like getting that? Because it's kind of hard on the website. It's kind of I mean, it says on the website how to do it, but I don't know, it's like, kind of difficult for them.

Facilitator: Yeah, we get we get what you're saying there for your friends, when they couldn't get that to work the first time? Do you know what their solution was? Did they bypass or did they keep at it until they got the free one made some phone calls, any ideas?

Participant D: Some of them, I just waited until I, like, saw them in person and just did it for them basically and one of my friends, he doesn't really need the free pass. So he was just, like, I'll just buy it.

Facilitator: Yeah, I've heard that from some other students, you know that they feel that they can just afford it. But you know, is that what we love about what you share there, and some of you have shared this, some of the things that you've shared, you are all what we would call transit ambassadors, right? Helping your friends, get the app, helping your friends, learn the bus routes, you guys are ambassadors of transit, and you play such an important role for our community and for your friends, to help them, you know, kind of get up to speed on these things. "Participant B," did you have something to chime in here?

Participant B: Kind of like, "Participant D," wasn't really me specifically, but my friends, we would try to go out and stuff and they didn't want to, obviously, they don't want to pay for the pass. So we would have to do use the youth pass thing. But then we'd have to wait because of the whole process for it. So we couldn't go that day for stuff. So I was wondering, because I don't know if you're able to get them at the little kiosks now? Or do you start to go through the whole process of getting them changed?

Facilitator: Yeah, for the way that youth cards are working, you can either we have some already that we're giving to like schools and stuff. So some schools have automatic youth cards. But otherwise, the way to do it is to use that online form or to call in, unfortunately, which is, like you "Participants B and D" both said that was one of the biggest things that we hear about on a regular basis. We've got an email address set up. Our biggest, most common issue that people get is well, how do I how do I turn it? How do I convert it? It takes it doesn't make sense. It takes too long, which is an issue that we won't be able to fix.

Facilitator: Yeah. Thanks for sharing that. "Participant F," did you have an issue that you could point out for us that maybe we could address?

Participant F: It took me a long time. So you know how you can put the pass on your phone? Me and a lot of my friends haven't been able to get the pass on our phones. So we have to use, like, the card, which is fine. Like, we're still getting free. But it's like I lose my pass all the time. I have like eight passes somewhere in my room. It's more accessible on your phone, but it's really hard to get it on.

Study Project Team member: Yeah. So that's a limitation of the system, unfortunately. And that's another thing that people complain about, is that when you have a physical like pass card, it doesn't work to use it on both the physical card and your phone. So you'd have to set

up a separate a separate one, you could still make it free with the online stuff. But you're right, that it won't transfer like that, unfortunately.

Facilitator: Yeah. But I think that, you know, SANDAG, and our partners at MTS and North County Transit District, I think some of the folks that are in the northern part of the county are using that system or, you know, continue to look to make improvements there.

Facilitator: I just want you to know how important it is for you know, it goes much beyond what if each of you, this is really super impactful, what you share is really going to help you know shape the free pass for much the future. I know that SANDAG is looking to extend the past into an older age group, perhaps 18 to 24. And some of your insights, and especially those of you chatting about going through college, right? We you know, when you age out of the free pass, we don't want that to impact your ability to get to college and work and internships, all those things that you're doing today. So I think, you know, I just want to make sure that you all realize how grateful we are. And really the whole the whole community around San Diego County for you joining us.

Study Project Team member: I would just say as an update on the extending the program that "Facilitator" said, I want all of you to know that yesterday, the SANDAG board of directors who kind of is some politicians who direct everything we do, they approved the budget for the next year. And in that budget, it includes an extension of the current program. So I know you've probably seen things to say it expires this summer, but now it's going to last through at least next summer with the free transit for youth in the exact same way. So you won't have to do anything to change anything, it'll automatically roll over and keep going for you.

Facilitator: That's right. But we'll be taking some of the inputs that you guys provided to make the case to make this, you know, either permanent or continue to provide free transit to our youth. Right, "study Project Team member?"

Study Project Team member: Exactly.

Facilitator: Yeah, I think we're good. I think I just want to thank everybody. We appreciate you. I think it's going to be nice and warm this weekend. So hopefully y'all can get outside, enjoy the weather and enjoy your weekend. We appreciate you all so much for being with us this morning.

Appendix C: ZIP Code Analysis

Survey Respondent ZIP Codes

The below analysis has filtered ZIP Codes to include those that were in a valid format (responses that were blank, less than five digits, or contained some other combination of characters have been excluded). Red font indicates out of San Diego County or invalid ZIP Code.

Question 25: What is your ZIP Code?

ZIP Code	Count	Percent	Neighborhood
92105	69	10.83%	City Heights
92115	44	6.91%	Rolando
92113	36	5.65%	Logan Heights
92173	31	4.87%	San Ysidro
91911	25	3.92%	Southwest Chula Vista
92111	22	3.45%	Kearny Mesa
92154	22	3.45%	Otay Mesa
92114	19	2.98%	Skyline
92103	18	2.83%	Hillcrest
92084	16	2.51%	Vista
92057	14	2.20%	Oceanside/Guajome
92083	14	2.20%	Vista
92104	13	2.04%	North Park
91910	13	2.04%	Chula Vista
92102	12	1.88%	Golden Hill/Mt. Hope/South Park
91950	11	1.73%	National City
92058	9	1.41%	Oceanside/Camp Pendelton
92011	8	1.26%	Carlsbad
92123	8	1.26%	Serra Mesa
92139	8	1.26%	Paradise Hills/Bay Terraces
92025	8	1.26%	Escondido
92101	8	1.26%	San Diego/Downtown
92069	8	1.26%	San Marcos
92027	7	1.10%	Escondido/Valley Center
92117	7	1.10%	Bay Park
92020	7	1.10%	El Cajon
92054	7	1.10%	Oceanside/Downtown/San Onofre
92008	7	1.10%	Carlsbad
92110	7	1.10%	Midway District/Morena
92126	6	0.94%	Mira Mesa
92010	6	0.94%	Carlsbad/Calavera Hills (Inland)
91913	6	0.94%	Otay Ranch
91932	6	0.94%	Imperial Beach

ZIP Code	Count	Percent	Neighborhood
92120	6	0.94%	Allied Gardens
92108	6	0.94%	Mission Valley East
92875	5	0.78%	La Mesa
91942	5	0.78%	Anaheim, CA
92037	4	0.63%	La Jolla
91977	4	0.63%	Spring Valley
92014	4	0.63%	Del Mar
92056	4	0.63%	Oceanside/Mira Costa
92021	4	0.63%	El Cajon/Bostonia/Crest/Blossom Valley
91915	4	0.63%	Otay Ranch
92026	4	0.63%	Escondido/Hidden Meadows/Lawrence Welk
92122	3	0.47%	University City
92116	3	0.47%	Normal Heights/Kensington/University Heights
91941	3	0.47%	La Mesa
92119	3	0.47%	Lake Murray
92071	2	0.31%	Santee
92081	2	0.31%	Vista
90017	2	0.31%	Los Angeles/Downtown
92109	2	0.31%	Pacific Beach
92129	2	0.31%	Rancho Peñasquitos
92078	2	0.31%	San Marcos
92028	2	0.31%	Fallbrook
90005	2	0.31%	Los Angeles/Koreatown/Wilshire
92019	2	0.31%	El Cajon/Rancho San Diego/Dehesa
91945	2	0.31%	Lemon Grove
95613	2	0.31%	Coloma, CA
92082	2	0.31%	Valley Center
92024	1	0.16%	Encinitas/Leucadia
98631	1	0.16%	Long Beach, WA
90925	1	0.16%	Los Angeles/West LA
91425	1	0.16%	Invalid
92092	1	0.16%	La Jolla
91504	1	0.16%	Burbank, CA
93240	1	0.16%	Lake Isabella, CA
92106	1	0.16%	Point Loma
97321	1	0.16%	Albany, OR
92107	1	0.16%	Ocean Beach
90744	1	0.16%	Wilmington, CA
91901	1	0.16%	Alpine
92215	1	0.16%	San Diego/Mid-City
92040	1	0.16%	Lakeside

ZIP Code	Count	Percent	Neighborhood
92926	1	0.16%	Invalid
92049	1	0.16%	Oceanside/Downtown
94533	1	0.16%	Fairfield, CA
91978	1	0.16%	Spring Valley
97205	1	0.16%	Portland, OR
92007	1	0.16%	Cardiff by the Sea
98118	1	0.16%	Seattle, WA
91902	1	0.16%	Bonita
91042	1	0.16%	Tajunga, CA
90071	1	0.16%	Los Angeles/Downtown
90748	1	0.16%	Wilmington, CA
92064	1	0.16%	Poway
92175	1	0.16%	San Diego/Downtown
92067	1	0.16%	Rancho Santa Fe
92547	1	0.16%	Invalid
90210	1	0.16%	Beverly Hills, CA
92911	1	0.16%	Invalid (Europe)
90723	1	0.16%	Paramount, CA
93032	1	0.16%	Oxnard, CA
92121	1	0.16%	Sorrento Valley
94101	1	0.16%	San Francisco, CA
92075	1	0.16%	Solana Beach
94621	1	0.16%	Oakland, CA
92015	1	0.16%	Invalid (Europe)
96814	1	0.16%	Honolulu, HI
92124	1	0.16%	Tierrasanta
97230	1	0.16%	Portland, OR
91914	1	0.16%	Chula Vista/Rolling Hills Ranch
97434	1	0.16%	Dorena, OR
92127	1	0.16%	Black Mountain Ranch
98444	1	0.16%	Tacoma, WA
92128	1	0.16%	Rancho Bernardo
99811	1	0.16%	Juneau, AK
90001	1	0.16%	Los Angeles/Downtown
92130	1	0.16%	Carmel Valley
Grand Total	637	100.00%	

Appendix D - Emissions
SANDAG Transportation Analysis & Modeling
Youth Opportunity Pass (YOP) Emissions Reduction Analysis

Background:

As part of the Data & Modeling group’s effort to assist in providing information that will help inform other departments, the amount of emissions saved due to implementation of the program was requested. This request is challenging due to the focused nature of the program and lack of telemetry from program participants.

Results:

Reduction Measure	Units	FY23 Unadjusted Annual Reduction	FY23 Unadjusted Daily Reduction	FY23 Annual 1/3rd Adjusted Reduction	FY23 Annual 1/2 Adjusted Reduction
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	Miles	10,494,034	33,852	6,996,372	5,247,017
Reactive Organic Gases (ROG)	Pounds	2,597	8.4	1,732	1,299
Oxides of Nitrogen (NOx)	Pounds	1,772	5.7	1,181	886
Carbon Dioxide (CO2)	Pounds	7,026,806	22,667.1	4,684,772	3,513,403
Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM2.5)	Pounds	452	1.5	302	226
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Pounds	21,978	70.9	14,653	10,989
Gasoline Fuel	Gallons	371,979	1,199.9	247,999	185,990

Discussion:

- Emissions reductions from a program such as the YOP should be considered ancillary or cascading benefits from the primary goal of offering youth, especially at-risk youth, use of transit at no cost. The YOP allowed youth to engage in development opportunities such as school related activity, socializing with peers, and increased household transportation access.
- Current models that simulate travel behavior rely on household surveying to help estimate and calibrate such models. Since youth privacy is a central focus, these models may not have enough data to precisely replicate youth travel patterns along with unique household arrangements for how youth are transported.
- The reductions were calculated by using all reasonably available data on youth transit ridership from MTS and NCTD. In order to gain an impression of how the YOP affected youth ridership on transit, a comparison between FY19 (pre pandemic, no YOP in place) and FY23 (post pandemic with YOP implemented)
- The output from the annual comparison was the gross number of additional trips made. We can reasonably ascribe the increase in number of youth transit trips to YOP due to the condition that post-pandemic transit ridership in general has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels.
- With total number of additional trips due to YOP, we then need to estimate how many of those trips would have otherwise been made by a vehicle. It is certain that not all additional trips would have been made in vehicle and even if trips did switch modes from auto to transit, that may lead to additional use of that household’s vehicle due to the YOP participant no longer needing a ride. We also must consider that the household income saving may have been used to offset the high cost of gasoline in 2022, which could lead to more driving.

Appendix D - Emissions

- YOP survey efforts indicated that 78% of those polled responded that they drive or ride in a vehicle less because of the pass. However, to what degree “less” means is unclear. Because of this, in order to remain conservative, it is estimated that one-third of the additional transit trips made by youth did not displace any auto travel.
- An even more conservative adjustment would be to assert that only half of additional trips would have been made in a vehicle. However, there is not enough direct evidence to support such a step. Also, trips are only half of the reduction analysis. Each trip must be assigned an average distance.
- For average trip distance, a conservative approach was also taken. For all additional transit trips except NCTD Coaster, an average trip distance of 4.4 miles was used. This is reflective of the average K-12 trip distance in the SANDAG Activity Based Model. While YOP participants can use the pass for any trip purpose at distances greater than 4.4 miles, no other readily available was available that would justify a longer average trip distance.
- The exception to average trip distance is the NCTD Coaster. For this subset of ~13,000 additional youth trips (less than 1% of all additional youth trips), an average trip distance of 26.43 miles was used. This is the reported average youth trip distance for NCTD Coaster tickets purchased using their zone system.
- With both adjusted components of displaced trips along with average trip distance, a total adjusted displaced VMT is calculated.
- The estimates of saved emissions were calculated from rates in standard output of CARB’s Emissions Factors (EMFAC v2017). The EMFAC output used in this evaluation is the same output for calendar year 2023 which was submitted as part of the air quality conformity analysis for the 2023 SANDAG Regional Transportation Improvement Program (2023 RTIP).
- EMFAC v2017 time output is for an average weekday. In order to convert from the annual figures to average weekday, a transit annualization factor of 310 days per year is used. This is the same annualization factor used for FY2019 for MTS/NCTD in the FTA’s National Transit Database (NTD).
- All calculations are in the next section.

Appendix D - Emissions

Analysis:

Table 1: Unadjusted and Adjusted VMT Displaced by YOP

	FY19 Youth Boardings*	FY23 Youth Boardings*	Additional Annual Trips	Estimated Average Trip Distance (mi) ^μ	Estimated Annual Additional Total Distance	Estimated Daily Total VMT ^Δ	1/3rd Rebound Adjustment VMT ANNUAL	1/2 Rebound VMT Adjustment ANNUAL	2/3rd Rebound VMT Adjustment ANNUAL
MTS Bus	3,643,558	4,876,851	1,233,293	4.36	5,376,042	17,342	3,584,207	2,688,021	1,792,014
MTS Trolley	2,465,471	3,382,964	917,493	4.36	3,999,442	12,901	2,666,428	1,999,721	1,333,147
NCTD Bus	611,677	807,200	195,523	4.36	852,303	2,749	568,231	426,152	284,101
NCTD Sprinter α	59,884	40,122	-19,762	4.36	(86,144)	(278)	(57,433)	(43,072)	(28,715)
NCTD Coaster	3,225	16,558	13,333	26.43	352,391	1,137	234,939	176,196	117,464
TOTAL	6,783,815	9,123,695	2,339,880	--	10,494,034	33,852	6,996,372	5,247,017	3,498,011

*: Boarding data sourced to MTS/NCTD for FY19 & FY23.

α: A significant portion of Sprinter boardings interact with CSUSM. With increased remote learning options post pandemic, Sprinter boardings with YOP in place are still lower than FY19 most likely due to less on campus activity.

μ: Average trip distance of 4.36mi based on ABM data for K-12 school trip purpose. 26.43mi based on NCTD Coaster Youth Trip fare purchase data.

Δ: Daily figures calculated by using annualization factor of 310.

Table 2: Emissions Analysis Using Rates From EMFAC v2017 for Calendar Year 2023

(2000 lbs per Ton)	RATES PER MILE	UNADJUSTED ANNUAL EMISSIONS SAVED (lbs)	UNADJUSTED DAILY EMISSIONS SAVED (lbs)	1/3rd Rebound Adjustment ANNUAL (lbs)	1/2 Rebound Adjustment ANNUAL (lbs)	2/3rd Rebound Adjustment ANNUAL (lbs)
ROG (tons)	1.2375E-07	2597.28	8.38	1731.61	1298.64	865.76
NOx (tons)	8.44259E-08	1771.94	5.72	1181.35	885.97	590.65
CO2 (tons)	0.0003348	7026806.18	22667.12	4684771.68	3513403.09	2342268.73
PM2.5 (tons)	2.1558E-08	452.46	1.46	301.66	226.23	150.82
CO (tons)	1.04717E-06	21978.16	70.90	14652.84	10989.08	7326.05
Gas (gallon x1000)	3.54467E-05	371979.28	1199.93	247998.59	185989.64	123993.09

Emission rates per mile from 2023 calendar year data from EMFAC v2017.