

## **WHY SHOULD THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA SUPPORT STATEWIDE UNIVERSAL STUDENT TRANSIT PASS PROGRAMS WITH GGRF FUNDING?**

Student transit pass programs around the U.S. have been shown to significantly increase student transit ridership (by as much as 200% according to a UCLA study of programs at 35 colleges and universities across the U.S. in 2001), and could help the State of California reach GHG, VMT and petroleum-use reduction goals, as well as state equity goals because of:

**BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS:** College is hard. Getting there shouldn't make it harder. These programs would benefit students and their families by:

- improving student access to education and opportunity
- lowering the cost of an education because students wouldn't need to own a car
- making it easier for students from disadvantaged communities—who often have to work at least part-time to pay for their education—to get to jobs.

**BENEFITS FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:** Schools are big generators of traffic in cities. These programs would benefit colleges and universities because they:

- reduce the student drive-alone mode share
- reduce the need for schools to build expensive parking structures on campus when the land and money could be used for educational purposes instead
- reduce parking demand by 400 to 1,000 spaces per campus, according to the UCLA study
- can be partially funded by small increases in student registration fees; the UCLA study found that 54% to 94% of students approved referenda to increase student fees for passes (the average cost = \$30/year).

**BENEFITS FOR TRANSIT AGENCIES:** The UCLA study also found that universal student transit pass programs:

- increase total transit ridership
- fill empty seats on bus and rail lines
- result in improved transit service because of higher demand
- reduce operating subsidies.

**BENEFITS FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC:** Everyone benefits because:

- of reduced traffic and car ownership
- of reduced parking demand
- of reduced air pollution and GHG emissions
- students are prompted to make decisions about where to live and work based on the proximity of transit, perhaps creating a lifelong habit of transit use — with the result that California becomes more sustainable
- an educated workforce will keep California economically competitive.

### **SOME SUCCESSFUL CALIFORNIA PROGRAMS:**

Transit ridership is down in California and across the U.S. because of the recession, lingering unemployment and lower gas prices, but transit agencies that foster student ridership through these programs are seeing ridership increases or much smaller declines.

- New programs at Rio Hondo Community College and Pasadena City College in LA County caused ridership to jump from 7% in 2009 to 46% in 2014 at Rio Hondo, and from 11% in 2009 to 47% in 2014 at Pasadena City College.
- As a result of the “Any Line, Any Time” program at Santa Monica College more than 40% of students, faculty and staff arrive on campus by bus.
- UC Berkeley's Class Pass program resulted in student transit mode share increasing from 6% in 1997 to 27% in 2008, while the student drive-alone share fell from 16% to 7%.
- Student transit pass programs at the University of California at Davis and at Cal State University Sacramento increased annual student transit ridership by 79% and 71% respectively.