



County of Fairfax, Virginia



Student Free Fare Program

TPB Regional Public Transportation
Subcommittee
February 23, 2016

Transit Services Division
Department of Transportation





Student Free Fare Program

Provides free trips on Fairfax Connector buses to Fairfax County high school and middle school students

- Developed in response to direction of Board of Supervisors



Purpose

- **Provide Fairfax County students with transportation options**
 - Freedom to access before and after school activities, tutoring, sports, clubs, community service, and employment
- **Workforce commuter preparedness**
 - Preparing the next generation of transit riders for a more urban transportation and multi-modal environment



Goals

- Short Term

- Fill gaps for school transportation services impacted by new, later school hours for FCPS High School students
- Provide flexibility for students to travel on existing service
- Increase Fairfax Connector ridership





Goals

- Longer Term

- As the County continues to grow more urban & densely populated; positions Fairfax Connector to be a vital and sustainable transportation option
- Establishes transit as an important component of the County's transportation system -- especially with Millennials
- Reduces congestion on existing & future transportation network, by reducing the number of trips that parents must make to transport students
- Workforce commuter preparedness





Pilot Program Requirements

- Pass required
- Pass distribution and permission forms maintained and distributed by FCPS
- Passes valid on Fairfax Connector only
 - Monday - Friday
 - 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Parent/guardian permission required
- Adherence to Fairfax Connector rules of conduct
- Provisions for home and private school students who reside in Fairfax County





Fairfax Connector Responsibilities

- Outreach
 - School outreach
 - Public outreach
- Pass production
 - Printing cost shared with FCPS
- Operational readiness
 - Enhanced bus operator training
 - Farebox programming (ridership data)





FCPS Responsibilities

- Pass distribution and tracking
 - 6,200 passes distributed to schools
 - Passes have a unique serial number; allows schools to track passes assigned to students
- Regular coordination with FCDOT on school outreach strategies and pass distribution



In-School Outreach

- Targeted 5 schools based on
 - Fairfax Connector bus service access
 - Geographic distribution
- Schools
 - Chantilly High School (Chantilly)
 - Edison High School (Alexandria)
 - Madison High School (Vienna)
 - Mount Vernon High School (Alexandria)
 - South Lakes High School (Reston)







Outreach



- [Elizabeth's Journey](#): How to Ride
 - Featured on Channels 16 & 21; in school media
 - Travel training
 - Bike & Ride training
 - Rules of riding
 - *“Give respect to get respect”*



Outreach

- [Web](#) & social media campaign  
- Pre-school Year Events/Open Houses
 - On-site pass sign-up/distribution
 - On-site Fairfax Connector bus, operator & staff
 - Customized map with bus stop and route information





Student Participation Targeted 5 Schools

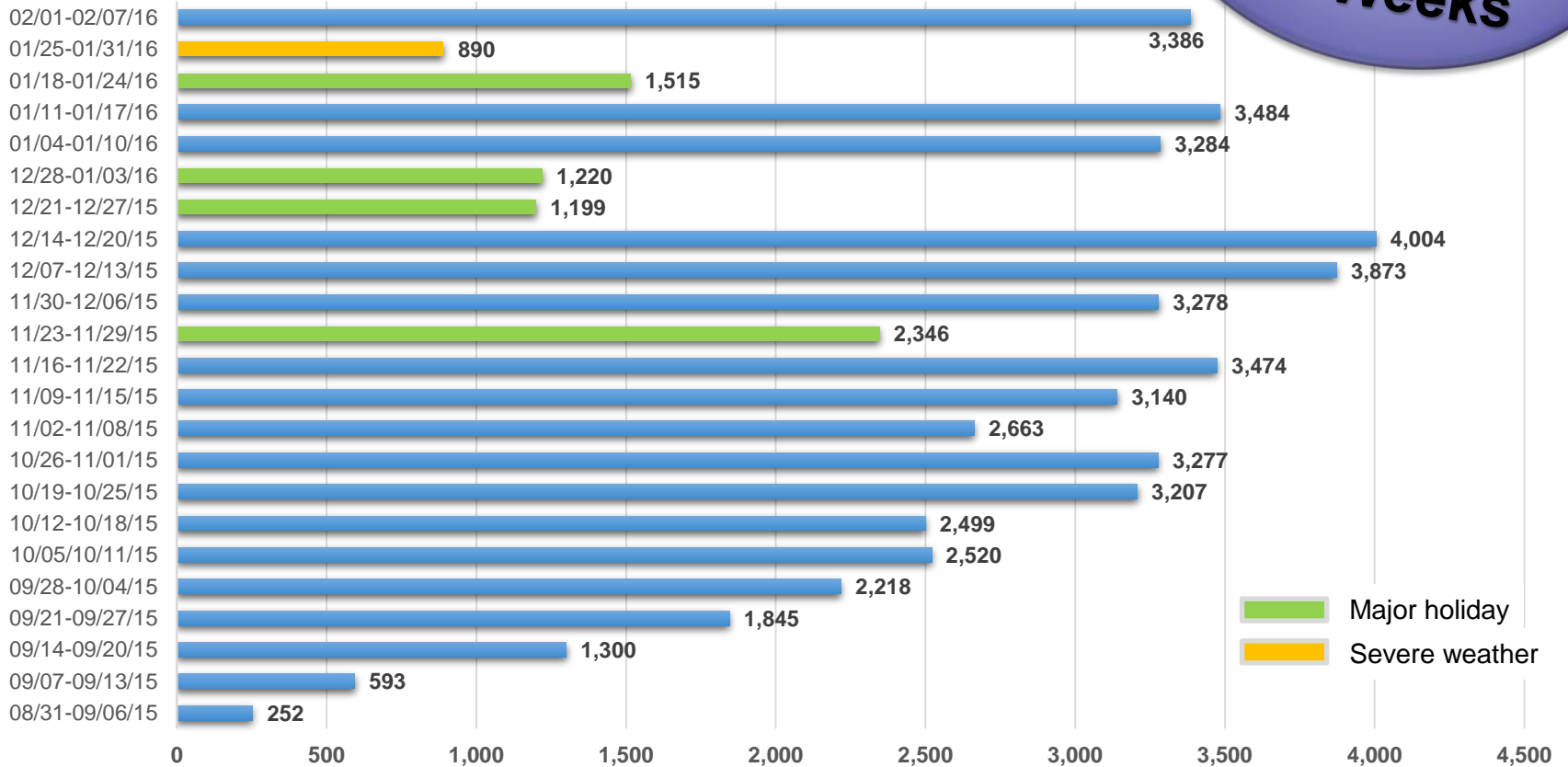
Location	# of Passes Distributed	High School Population	% of Students with Passes
Chantilly HS	191	2,680	7%
Edison HS	814	1,936	42%
James Madison HS	81	2,109	4%
Mt. Vernon HS	314	1,963	16%
South Lakes HS	943	2,430	39%
TOTALS	2,343	11,118 students	22% (average)

**See handout for pass distribution at all eligible schools*



55,000 Student Trips in 23 Weeks

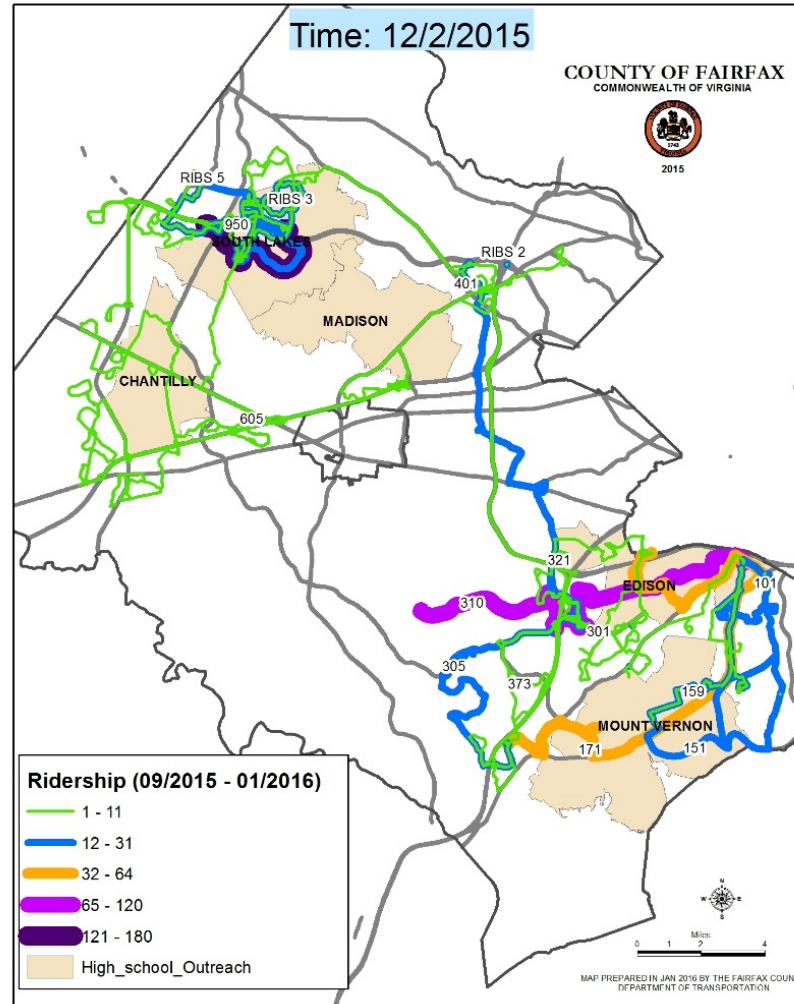
Fairfax Connector Weekly Student Ridership





County of Fairfax, Virginia

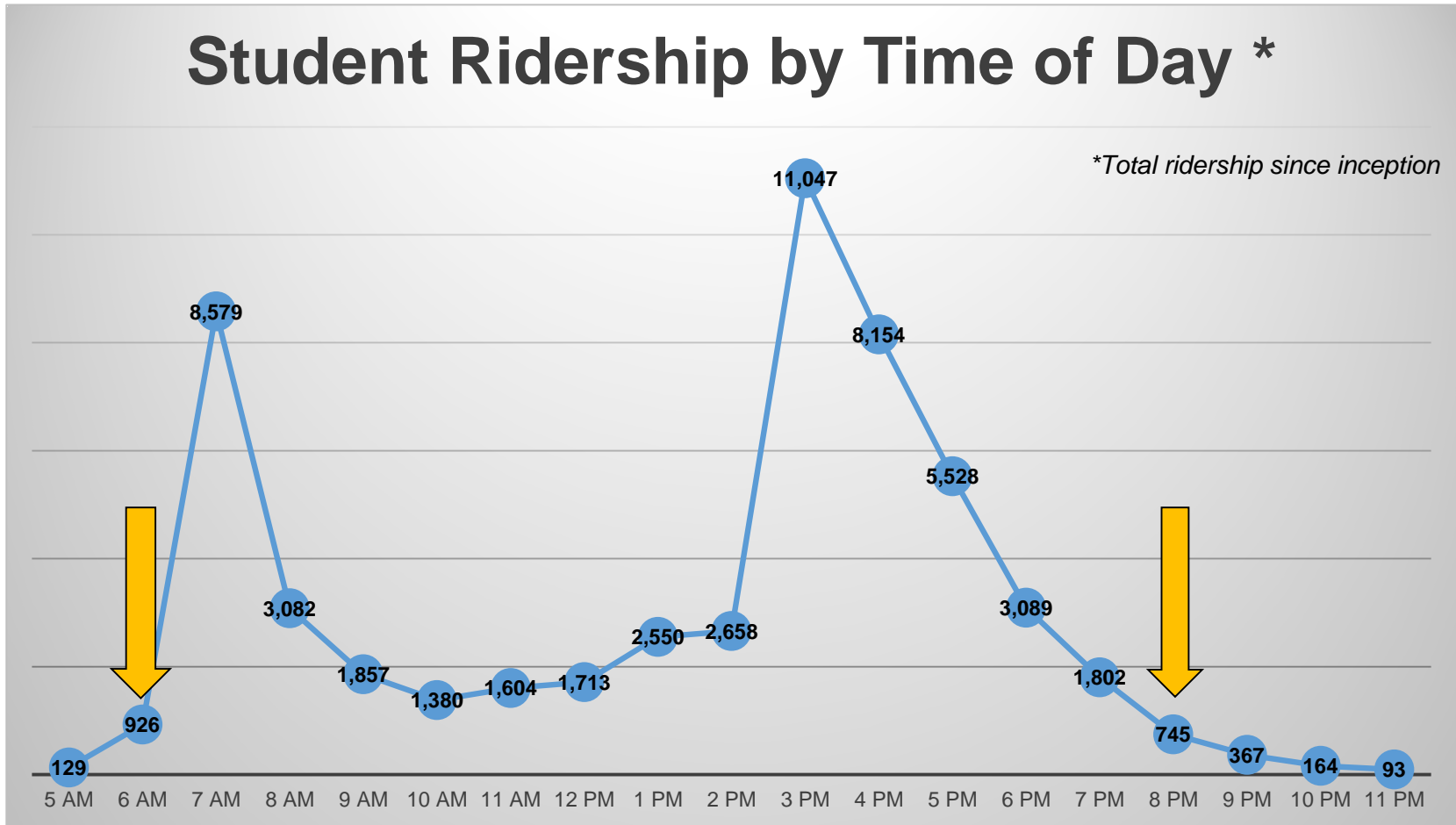
Fairfax Connector Student Ridership





Student Ridership by Time of Day *

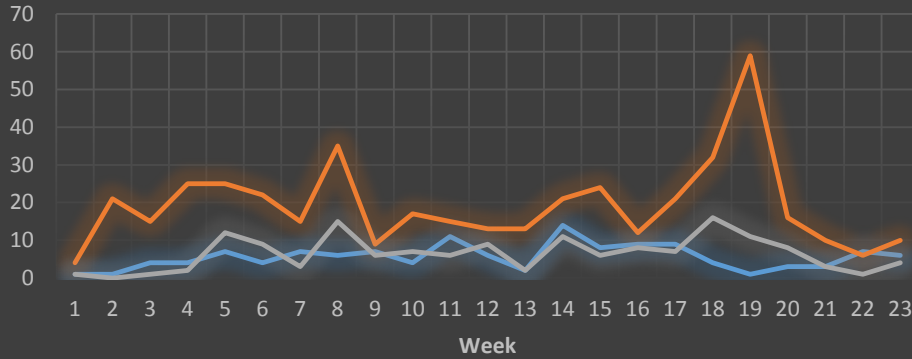
**Total ridership since inception*





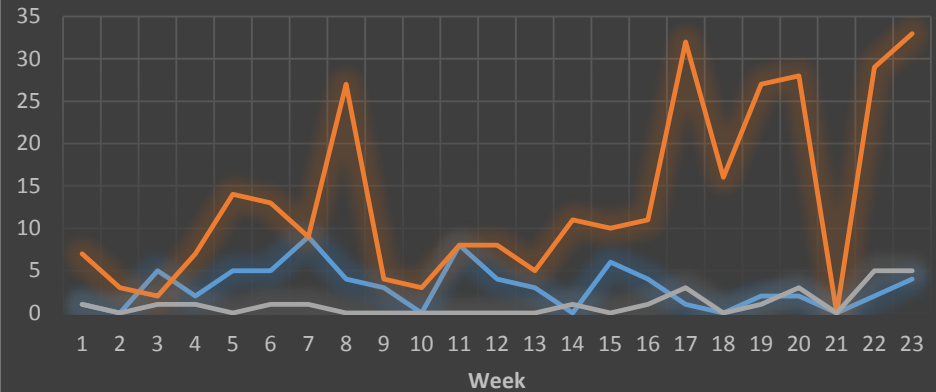
Weekday Student Ridership before 6 AM & after 8 PM

— Herndon — Huntington — West Ox



Weekend Student Ridership

— Herndon — Huntington — West Ox



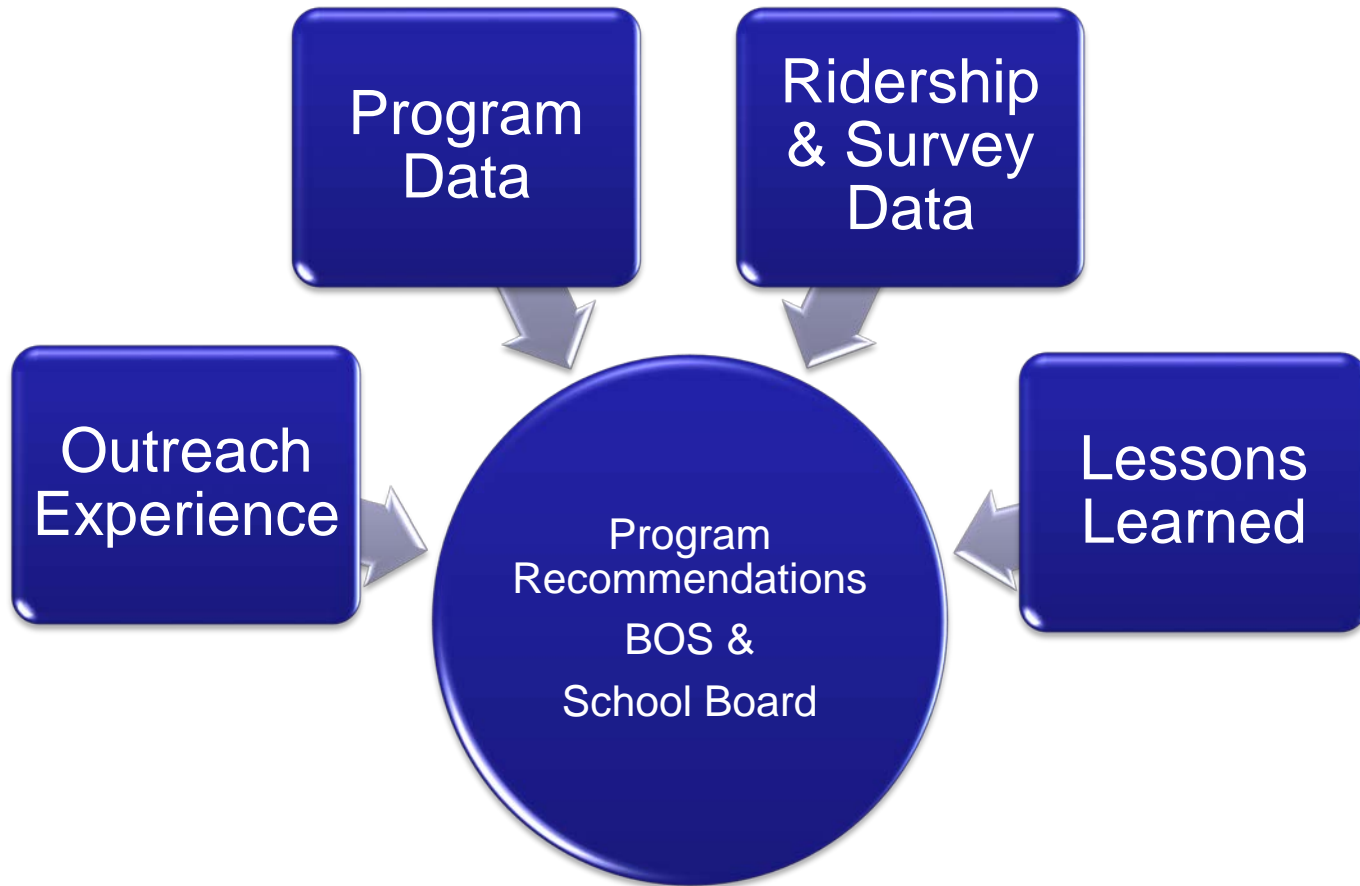


Next Steps: Assess Opinions

- Program impact
 - Surveys
 - Gather quantitative and qualitative data from students, parents, school officials, and bus operators
 - Focus Groups
 - Allow students to share their ideas for shaping the program
 - Increasing ridership among peers

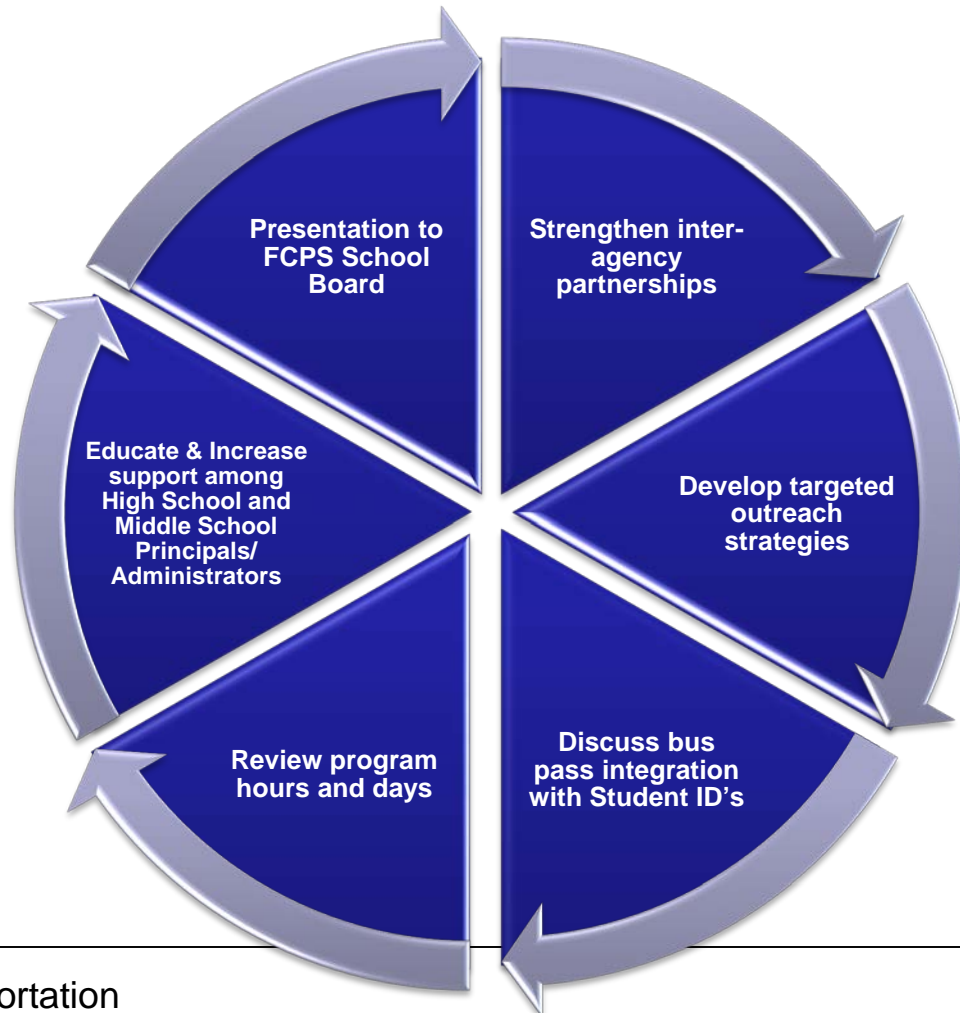


Next Steps: Recommend





Next Steps: Improve & Educate





Next Steps: Refine & Engage

- Board member feedback and approval
- Develop recommendations for SY2016-17
 - Pass usage times
 - Later than 8pm? Weekends?
 - Need to remain cognizant of SLEEP study findings and FCPS objectives
 - New FCPS student ID's, with photo?
 - New schools to focus outreach
 - Ways to assist FCPS students served by Metrobus instead of Fairfax Connector



Next Steps: Refine & Engage

- Refine outreach program
 - Update “Elizabeth’s Journey” PSA video
 - Update outreach materials
 - Robust social media campaign
 - Vary the schools for targeted outreach
 - Increase in-school and event outreach opportunities
 - Parity: include bus pass information/forms with school parking pass information



Questions?

