



CITY OF BOSTON • MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
MARTIN J. WALSH

November 16, 2015

Secretary Stephanie Pollack  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160  
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Secretary Pollack,

The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) is instrumental for the well being of the people of Boston. For our most vulnerable residents—especially young people—the T is a lifeline, providing the primary mode of transportation to school, jobs, arts and culture, healthcare and other services, and the business of everyday life.

For that reason, it was with great excitement that the City of Boston entered into an innovative partnership with the MBTA to implement the pilot program of the new “Youth Pass.” As the city is making a significant investment of human and physical resources in this pilot program, I am further excited to note the program’s success thus far. Since July 1, hundreds of Boston youth have benefited from affordable transportation and increased access to opportunities to learn, work and thrive. It is clearer to me than ever that the full Youth Pass program is a comprehensive solution to the longstanding challenge of young people’s transportation in and around the city.

As a municipal partner in this program, my staff took on key aspects of the administration of the Youth Pass, including publicity, enrollment, card printing, data collection and sales of the pass. The latter, sales and cash handling, proved a significant challenge. We took it on for the duration of the pilot program with the expectation that a full Youth Pass program will integrate purchases of the pass into MBTA terminals, which are appropriately equipped for such a task.

In the interest of success of the Youth Pass program and all Boston young people, we look forward to continuing this partnership with the MBTA. The City proposes to continue its role as administrator and manager of enrollment and card printing under the leadership of our Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF) and our Workforce Development Department.

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After our experience with the pilot program, I recommend the following for the MBTA's implementation of a full Youth Pass program:

- i. Move forward with the full Youth Pass program on July 1, 2016, avoiding any interruption for pilot participants and beginning open enrollment in the spring.
- ii. Municipal partners, including the City of Boston, continue to administer enrollment and pass distribution limited to eligible youth, while the MBTA integrates pass sales into its network of fare terminals.
- iii. Include both the monthly Youth Pass (\$26) and weekly Youth Pass (\$7) for purchase at fare terminals by those who have enrolled in the program, so that youth without \$26 at the start of the month can access the benefits of the program.
- iv. Expand the eligibility pool for youth to enroll in the Youth Pass by adding two-year college to the enrollment verification list for those 19 and up, and further expanding this category to ages 19-25, which better reflects the definition of youth in both municipal and federal programs.

Moving forward with these changes will build on the respective strengths of city government and the MBTA, increase our capacity to administer this program in a cost effective manner, and provide the greatest benefit for young residents of Boston.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. I greatly appreciate your attention to equity and your leadership in resolving the longstanding problem of affordable transportation for Boston youth. We look forward to working together to make the full Youth Pass program a great success and a leading example of collaborative, effective policy in the Commonwealth. If you would like to further discuss these recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact me directly or continue to work with Chief Arroyo and the Health and Human Services staff.

Sincerely,



Martin J. Walsh  
Mayor of Boston