SUMMARY STATEMENT

ITEM NO.: PATCO-14-010   SUBJECT: Promotion of PATCO to Students

COMMITTEE: Finance

COMMITTEE MEETING DATE: March 5, 2014

BOARD ACTION DATE: March 19, 2014

PROPOSAL: That the Board authorizes staff to promote PATCO ridership through special programs for students in 2014.

Amount: For School Field Trips:
Annual estimated value of free rides = $1,500

For FREEDOM Card Discount:
Estimated 400 cards x $5/card = $2,000

Total Cost of Special Student Programs: $3,500

PURPOSE: To promote future ridership by familiarizing students with PATCO.

BACKGROUND: PATCO’s basic fare structure offers no student or group discounts. To familiarize the young people of a primarily car culture region with public transit and to make school field trips affordable, PATCO has in the past allowed school groups to travel at half fare. School groups have purchased a one-ride ticket for each student and chaperone participating in a field trip. Staff accompanied the group on their initial trip, using this opportunity to convey essential safety tips and the advantages of public transit. The school group then has used its tickets for its return ride. With the limited budgets that schools have for activities such as field trips, the half fare encourages them to use PATCO, thereby introducing students to the benefits of public transportation. In 2013 we hosted 11 such field trips and provided $1,500 worth of tickets.

In 2013 PATCO expanded this initiative by offering an incentive to students to become regular riders. Typically a customer purchases a FREEDOM card from the vending machine for $5 and preloads at least $20 value onto the card. To encourage students to commute on the train, PATCO made the FREEDOM card available to students who register at the FREEDOM Card Service Center, waiving the $5 fee for the card itself. (Students would pay the regular fare for each trip.) The $5 saving for the card itself has been promoted on PATCO’s website; the
“coupon” is also available to local colleges and universities to post on their websites. In 2013, we sold 171 cards through this new student FREEDOM card discount initiative.

The cost to PATCO for this program is not expected to exceed $2000 (400 students x $5 per FREEDOM card). The benefit to PATCO is the fares paid not only as the student is commuting to school but also over his/her lifetime.

These initiatives to promote PATCO to students had been approved by the Board for calendar year 2013 via PATCO-12-029.

It is recommended that the Board authorize PATCO to continue to its promotion of public transit through school discounts in 2014.

**SUMMARY:**

- **Amount:** $3,500
- **Source of Funds:** Operating Budget
- **Capital Project #:** N/A
- **Operating Budget:** General Fund
- **Master Plan Status:** N/A
- **Other Fund Sources:** N/A
- **Duration of Contract:** N/A
- **Other Parties Involved:** N/A
RESOLUTION

RESOLVED: That the Board authorizes PATCO to promote use of public transit by students throughout 2014.

SUMMARY: Amount: $3,500
Source of Funds: Operating Budget
Capital Project #: N/A
Operating Budget: General fund
Master Plan Status: N/A
Other Fund Sources: N/A
Duration of Contract: N/A
Other Parties Involved: N/A