

Survey Overview

This survey ran on the UASU Perks platform from August 29 to September 1. Capitalizing on the Week of Welcome influx of users to the platform, the survey reached 1307 respondents, almost entirely undergraduate students.

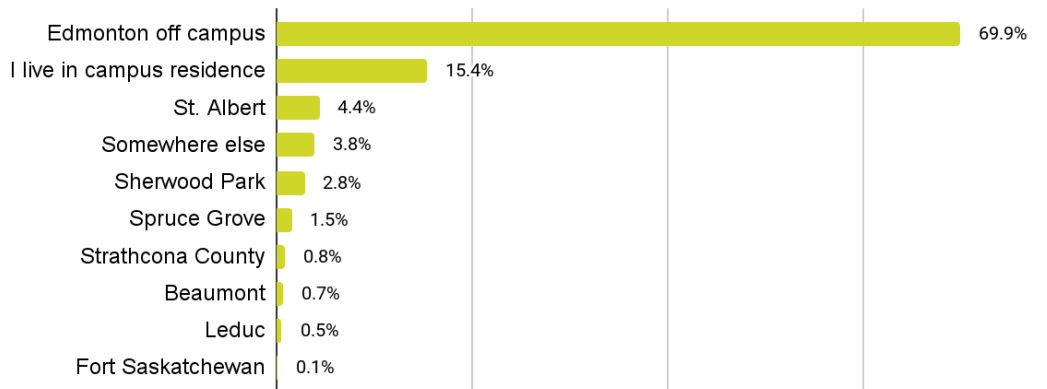
- When asked how they usually get to campus, in a 'choose all that apply' format:
 - 73% take public transit
 - 32% walk
 - 20% drive alone
 - 16% carpool
 - 6% bike
 - 2% use some other method
 - *35% walk and/or bike*
 - *31% drive alone and/or by carpool*
 - 1% chose 'N/A (e.g. I'm 100% remote)'
- These proportions are roughly consistent across respondents' year of study.
- Around 1 in 10 respondents live outside Edmonton:
 - 4.4% commute from St. Albert, approximately 1500 undergraduates
 - 2.8% commute from Sherwood Park, approximately 1000 undergraduates
 - 1.5% commute from Spruce Grove, approximately 500 undergraduates
 - 0.8% commute from Strathcona County, approximately 300 undergraduates
 - 0.7% commute from Beaumont, approximately 250 undergraduates
 - 0.5% commute from Leduc, approximately 200 undergraduates

- Almost all respondents answered a text question about safety on public transit. The most frequent responses focused on:
 - Winter, snow/ice, and weather conditions
 - Night and darkness
 - Respondents' gender and explicit sexual harassment
 - Witnessing violence
 - Routes, commute length, and transit frequency
 - Cost of parking
 - Feeling unsafe around unhoused people
 - Garbage and drug paraphernalia in transit stations
- Almost all respondents answered a text question about desired changes to public transit. The most frequent responses echoed many of the concerns above, but heavily emphasized the following:
 - More reliable connections to peripheral communities, especially St. Albert
 - More accessible, reliable, and frequent route coverage
 - Better light in vehicles and stations
 - Better cleanliness in vehicles and stations
 - Checkpoints/turnstiles
 - More consistent availability of heaters in waiting areas
 - More municipal investment in shelters for unhoused people
- 51% of respondents use their U-Pass for at least five round trips per week.
- Focusing on the respondents in peripheral communities, in the U-Pass zone but outside ETS coverage:
 - Just as likely as Edmonton students outside residence to consider public transit one of their primary ways to get to campus (76% vs. 83%)
 - Just as likely as Edmonton students outside residence to take 5+ round trips per week by U-Pass (55% vs. 57%).
 - Of students in peripheral communities who take 5+ round trips per week by U-Pass, 34% also drive. Many text responses described a park-and-ride strategy, often involving driving to a bus stop, then taking a train.

- Many mentions (in an attached text question) of a greater need for reliable connections to St. Albert. Other highlighted communities include Morinville, Beaumont, and Stony Plain.

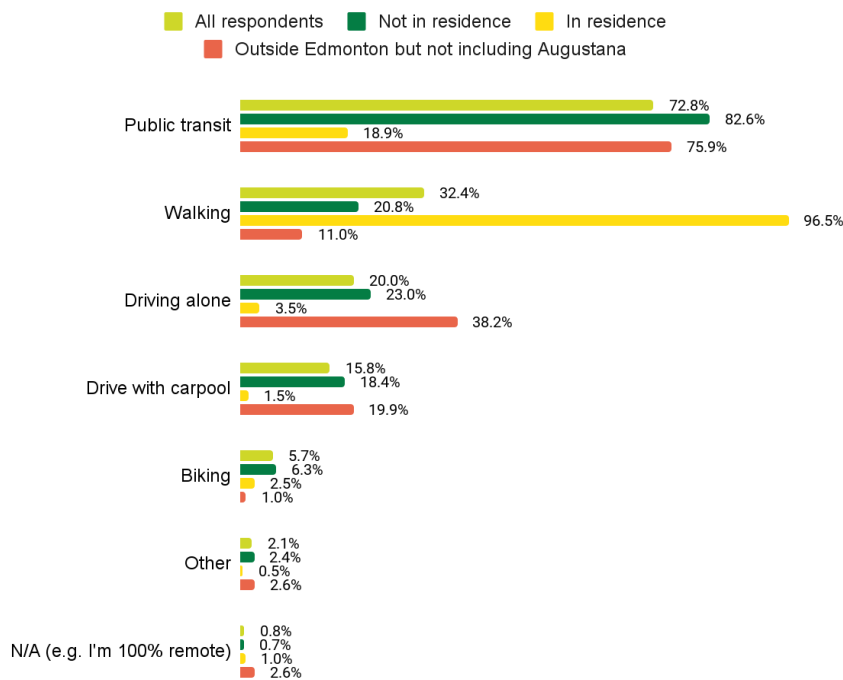
"Where do you live/commute from to get to campus?"

At least 8% of respondents live in the U-Pass zone but outside ETS coverage. This would correspond to 2800 UAlberta undergraduates or more.



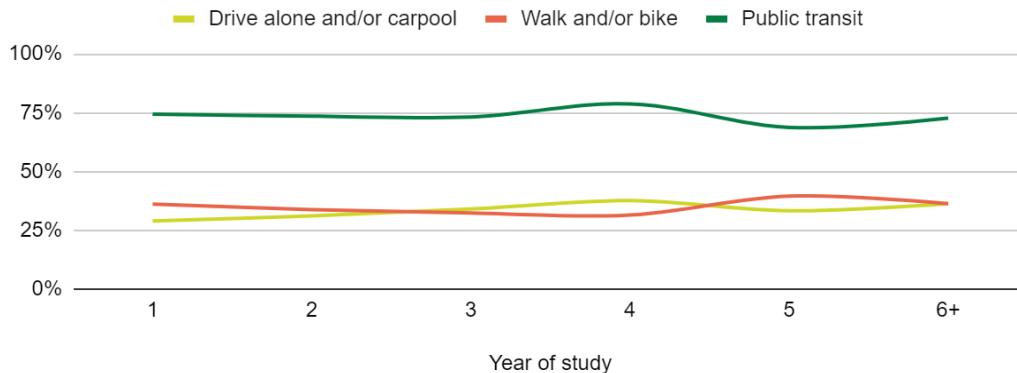
"How do you usually get to campus? Choose all that apply."

73% of students consider public transit a primary way to get to the University. This rises to 83% after excluding students who live in campus residence, and 1/3 of students in residence still rely on public transit as a primary way to get to campus.



By far the bikingest faculties are Faculté Saint-Jean (14.3%), Engineering (9.5%), and Education (9.1%). The least likely faculties to bike are Science (3.4%) and Business (4.4%).

Around 1/3 of students (30.5%), drive to campus (alone and/or carpooling). A similar proportion walk and/or bike (35.2%). Trends were largely stable by year of study, though first-year students were less likely to drive.



"What, if anything, makes getting to campus difficult or unsafe for you?"

Students provided 7700 words of text responses. The most common responses centred on the following concerns, often in combination:

- Winter, snow/ice, and weather conditions
- Night and darkness
- Respondents' gender and explicit sexual harassment
- Witnessing violence
- Routes, commute length, and transit frequency
- Cost of parking
- Feeling unsafe around unhoused people
- Garbage and drug paraphernalia in transit stations

Examples of noteworthy or representative responses:

- When the bus is really crowded or when it's really really cold out and I have to drive to the bus terminal.
- When bike detection is down on certain streets. Cyclists not obeying traffic laws.

- The LRT is a very uncomfortable place to be a young woman alone, and parking is too expensive so I am forced to put myself in the unsafe situation we call Edmonton transit.
- I come from Enoch reservation, and the only thing that would make it difficult would be the amount of time it takes to get from the west side to campus.
- I wish there were more maps or posts stationed around the University that can direct students to the correct buildings. I'm not very good at remembering where the buildings I study at are or what direction I should take in order to get there so the posts indicating what buildings are where would be an awesome help.
- Near campus the lack of a way to get from the multi-use pathway coming up Emily Murphy hill from Groat to the bike lane that runs south on the way to campus. Poorly cleared multi-use trails in winter.
- We had two weeks where a hill was a sheet of ice and it took multiple complaints to 311 being ignored before my councillor got involved and the pathway was sanded within 48 hours of any additional freezing rain for the remainder of the season.
- The ETS routes are always delayed around my area, and perfectly aligned to make me miss the LRT just as I arrive at the station, making commutes to and from 30 minutes longer than they should be. At certain times in the day, it is faster for me to walk for 40 minutes from the station home than to wait for a bus to take me home. [Student in Edmonton, off campus.]
- People in LRT acting aggressively, needles and human waste in stations.
- Having to walk 15 minutes in the winter is not going to be fun, in the past I've had ice double the amount of time it's taken me to walk to school.
- Night classes. I live in a particularly unsafe neighbourhood so I don't feel safe walking outside from the transit station to my place when the sun is down.
- Stations are inaccessible for disabled people with few accessible entrances or automated doors, and lots of long walks underground.
- Knowing that at any moment, someone could attack me and nobody's gonna help.
- Regarding biking: I find the "last-mile connection" to North Campus from the south side actually somewhat difficult to do legally and/or safely. Some potential "last-mile connections" & their issues:
 - (1) 114 St, north of 82 Ave, west-side paved sidewalk is not identified as a Shared Pathway on the City of Edmonton's Bicycle Map, does not have explicit Shared Pathway signs, and does not quite physically look like a Shared Pathway; thus, unfortunately I cannot ride on this paved sidewalk.

- (2) 112 St, north of 82 Ave, is identified as an on-road bicycle route & has painted Sharrow markings, but that route has a bit too much motor vehicle traffic for me.
 - (3) 111 St, north of 83 Ave, unfortunately has had its contra-flow northbound bicycle lane removed : 'c
 - (4) 110 St, north of 83 Ave, protected bicycle lanes are too much of a detour in the trip to North Campus.
 - (5) 115 St, north of University Ave, is an alright on-road bicycle route but turning left or right at 87 Ave (T-intersection) can be challenging on bike.
- The LRT is low key pretty dangerous, especially in early morning or late night.
 - The bus frequency to southside neighborhoods is also not very good, a 30 minute bus ride to get to century park is very long because the buses wait for 10 minutes at a stop.
 - I am a mature student with a young child, so I need to do a daycare drop off before I come to campus. Taking transit quadruples the amount of time it would take me to get to campus compared to driving.
 - Driving the far distance, especially in the winter time and not having designated parking at Campus Saint Jean for students.
 - I feel like as a woman taking public transportation is always a bit risky. I have to walk 4 city blocks to the LRT station which can feel scary when it gets dark.
 - I'd have to bunk with a friend who lives at a better and closer route to campus till I can come up with a better alternative of coming to school.
 - The cold and ice in winter, also sexual harassment on the lrt is annoying but not really too big a deal.
 - I have about a twenty minute walk everyday. I'm worried about the winter when it's darker for longer and I have to be outside walking for twenty minutes both ways.
 - Buses going St. Albert to Edmonton can be inconsistent and you often are choosing between super early or late to class.
 - In the winter when sidewalks are slippery and temperatures are very low.
 - Safety. My stop is the very last stop at Clareview and doing that solo at night and then walking to my car blows.
 - ETS bus schedules are not very frequent and take very long to get to the west side of Edmonton.

"If you could change one thing about public transit in and around Edmonton, what would it be?"

Compared to the previous question, similar themes emerged from a similar volume of text responses. The most common responses centred on more accessible and frequent routes; it seems clear that long or uncertain waits compound many of the challenges and worries that students reported. Other frequent comments involved cleanliness and better lighting in stations and vehicles. A vocal minority favored more aggressive policing/relocation/checkpoints.

Examples of noteworthy or representative responses:

- Arc card should have been implemented about a decade ago along with ensuring reliability.
- Better enforcement of who can get on the LRT, perhaps a check point before you can even enter LRT station.
- Having more lights in train stations during early morning and late night commutes.
- Every waiting area has a heating system.
- Just the stricter regulations about homeless people on transit. I get that they have to be somewhere, but if someone would come along once per trip and make sure they're not causing a ruckus, that would be great.
- I could and have written an essay about this and the fact that the sprawl of the city and lack of proper investment in public transit has made the city super inaccessible, so like idk fund LRT and busing services so more people use them and fewer people are disadvantaged by not having a car.
- The bus routes. They cut down how many go through neighbourhoods or the times it comes through, sometimes making it inefficient to get home or to school.
- Better access to help buttons that alert the driver of the bus or LRT.
- Have direct routes from transit centres to the school.
- More transit security that has de-escalation training to avoid hostile situations.
- ETS needs to have routes to and from places that people actually are going and coming from. It feels like I'm supposed to go out of my way to find a route. It should be the other way around. Routes that are useful should be so easily accessible that there is never a thought given to trying to use a different form of transportation.

- Actual bylaw and police enforcement. Turnstiles like every other major city in the world.
- Frequency and efficiency. The bus system if not on a major line and going to a major line destination was bad before the updated system. It's terrible now.
- CLASSES END AT —:50. ST ALBERT MORNING BUSES LEAVE AT —:50. Not a big deal, but was frustrating because you'd have to wait around for an hour (does give me time to study tho... maybe that's a smart move).
- That there would be more bus routes. You can't go directly to Southgate from Mill Woods or vice versa. Routes that normally take 20 mins by car take over an hour in transit. It makes sense that buses would take longer, but I think the difference is a bit much. Also, THE LRT STATION THAT'S TAKING FOREVER TO BE BUILT!
- More peace officers and shelters for the homeless.
- More trips between St. Albert and the University.
- When taking the LRT we need a gate system. Where you need to scan your ARC card or use your transit ticket to get either on the train or the platform to the train.
- I would have it connect more directly with Beaumont and surrounding areas just outside of Edmonton so taking public transport into Edmonton doesn't take 2 hours if it exists at all.
- Less people pooping/peeing on LRT elevator.
- I came from Toronto, and so far the public transit in Edmonton has been far more clean and convenient than Toronto's TTC.
- Better chairs. Vancouver has better chairs than Edmonton in the majority of their buses honestly.
- More bussing from Stony Plain.
- The times. I wish that the bus times for Spruce Grove weren't so early.
- Edmonton transit is worse than Sherwood Park transit. Way more transfers. Takes longer.

"How often do you use your U-Pass this semester? Pick the closest answer. (A 'round trip' is a trip to a destination and back again, so going to campus and coming home later would be one round trip.)"

Half of all respondents use their U-Pass for at least five round trips per week. Within the limits of our survey question, U-Pass usage for eligible students outside Edmonton looks virtually identical to usage patterns for Edmonton students who live outside residence.

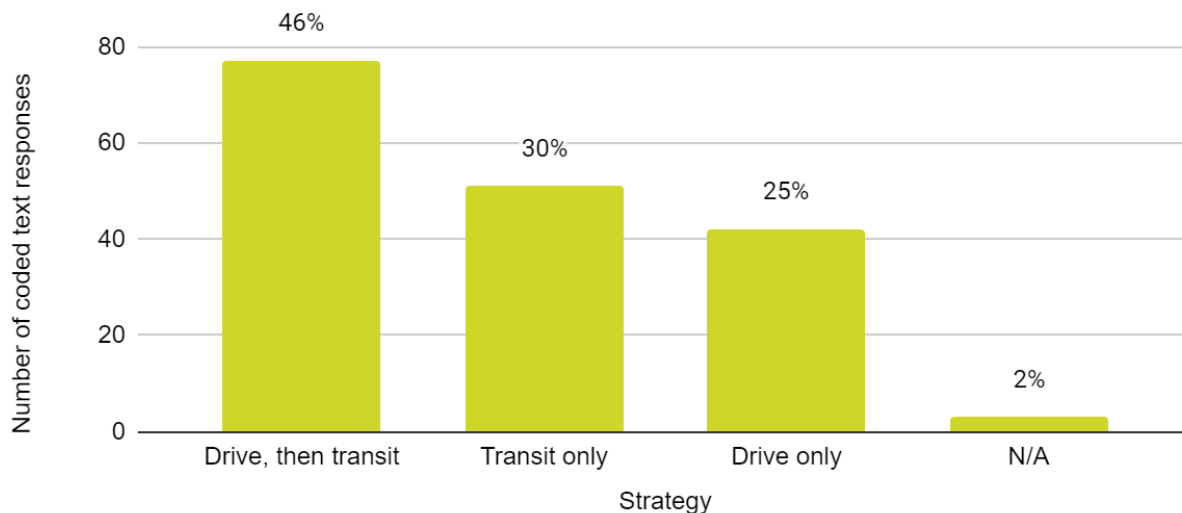
Our goal for the question was to assess transit needs for students outside Edmonton, and since the U-Pass emerged as a very common choice for students outside Edmonton, an expected difference in the top category (5+ trips) did not appear, and the scale did not extend high enough to break down high ridership further.



Looking closer at students outside Edmonton (not including Augustana) who take at least five round trips by U-Pass per week, 34% (equivalent to roughly 1000 students) also drive alone or by carpool. The combination of driving and U-Pass usage strongly suggests a need for more functional transit connections to peripheral communities, as noted in many of the text responses above.

"Let's talk about transit between regions. If you picked something other than Edmonton above, what's your preferred way to get from, say, St. Albert to campus? Drive and then take public transit? Public transit all the way? Some other combination?"

Filtering for non-Augustana students outside Edmonton, this question produced 168 substantive responses. As a handful of students use two different strategies at different times of year based on weather and health, this chart does not sum to 168:



Noteworthy or representative text responses:

- Carpool in (takes way less time) and bus home (when I can chill out and listen to music for an hour).
- Drive and then take Transit. I live in Morinville so I have to drive about 20 minutes to St. Albert and bus from Naki Transit Center to UofA.
- Drive to a bus stop, take the bus to the LRT station, take the LRT to the university.
- Drive to park and ride area, catch a couple buses and then use the LRT.
- Drive/car pool or walk to bus stop, bus to heritage valley, shuttle/bus to tram, tram to school, same opposite way.
- Driving, as I'll be coming to class once a week from 2:30 hours away.
- I drive from my home in Morinville to the Naki Transit Centre in St. Albert. I then take a bus to North Campus. It would be convenient if there was a bus that came to Morinville!

- I drive to and from as there is limited to no transit in Beaumont that is convenient or that works with my schedule.
- I live in Morinville, so I drive in to the Naki Transit Centre in St. Albert and take the bus from there, or I drive and park on campus. I have chronic pain so the bus is now inaccessible to me, but I might have to try again if I can't get a parking pass for fall.
- I live in St. A!! I take public transit. Only take my car if I missed the bus and have something urgent. Wish parking was less expensive because there are times it's more convenient to drive, e.g. staying on campus late.
- I take public transit all the way but that is due to route proximity and the times buses arrive. For me it only costs about 10 minutes extra to take the bus rather than drive to the larger public transit stops, but for others I know it can take 30+ minutes of waiting.
- That sounds like absolute ass I would never do that to myself.