

Date: 08/25/2020

To: Students' Union Council

Re: Vice President Operations & Finance 2020/21 Report #9

Dear Council,

Happy to be seeing you all again! I hope you are all healthy and well. These last two weeks have been some of the most intense regarding advocacy for transit and the UPass. I will devote a fair bit of this report on an update where possible, and encourage your questions at our Council meeting.

Fall Transit Update

City Council on August 19th

As Students' Council was informed, ETS brought their Fall transit proposal to City Council on Monday August 17th. City Council decided to hear the entire list of student speakers on their list, and so moved ETS' presentation and the hearing to Wednesday the 19th. We very much appreciate City Council for hearing the Students' Associations and Students' Councilors, as well as some students-at-large, on this issue.

ETS gave a very short presentation on their proposal which, as mentioned to Students' Council before, was the extension of the Youth Pass to students over the age of 24. Our reasons for dissatisfaction with this were: (a) the fact that the pass already exists and therefore only represents relative savings for older students; and (b) that it still represents a 61% price increase compared to what students of all ages were expecting to pay under the UPass before it was cancelled for the Fall.

Positive Outcomes

The primary positive outcome of the City Council was that the Ride Transit Program is now available to students based on Individual Income (as opposed to Household Income). This means that students over the age of 18 who make less than \$29,069/year can qualify for a \$34/month pass, and a \$48.50/month pass if they earn between \$29,070 and \$33,033/year. Find more information at [this link](#).

Students over the age of 24 who do not qualify for the Ride Transit pass can purchase a Youth Pass for \$72.50/month *instead of* an Adult Pass for \$97/month. Students over 24 can also purchase Youth ticket books. These can all be purchased at SUBmart!

Negative Outcomes

There are three negative outcomes from the meeting with City Council:

1. International Students do not currently qualify for the Ride Transit Program because of the documentation requirements. We think this is unfair, because (a) there is official

documentation that International Students can use to prove their status, and (b) International Students pay very high tuition to study in Edmonton, and should not be unfairly subjected to even higher costs.

2. Students under the age of 18 do not currently qualify for the Ride Transit Program because of the documentation requirements. This is unfair, because there may be First-Year Students who should not be excluded from student benefits.
3. The application process for Ride Transit is cumbersome, and it can take anywhere from two to eight weeks for a student to receive their pass when they first qualify.

Plans Going Forward

The first thing we will do (and have likely done by the time you are reading this report) is contact ETS' (acting) Branch Manager (who presented at City Council) to very clearly outline the problems with the Ride Transit Program as described above. We believe that there is still room going forward to make these changes.

We will also aim to help students through the Ride Transit application process through easy explanation resources to minimize frustration with the process.

We will contact other Transit Authorities from the region to inquire about Fall transit solutions for students living or working in other municipalities.

UPass Update

Negotiations

As Students' Council knows, I am in negotiations with ETS right now for the next four-year contract. This update section is so small because I am under obligation not to disclose specific information about the negotiations. I can tell you that we met on August 18th and 20th, and that we will meet again to continue negotiations from September 15th to 17th.

As always, if you have any questions about the contents of this report, or simply want to talk, please feel free to reach out! Stay safe and healthy.

All the best,

Alana Krahn

University of Alberta Students' Union Vice President (Operations & Finance)