

Spring and Summer U-Pass for the University of Regina

Date	January 8, 2020
To	Community and Protective Services Committee
From	Citizen Services
Service Area	Transit & Fleet
Item No.	CPS20-1

RECOMMENDATION

That the Community and Protective Services Committee recommends that City Council:

1. Delegate authority to the Executive Director Citizen Services (or designate) to negotiate and approve a contract with the Students Union of the University of Regina (URSU) for a U-Pass program in the spring and summer, starting in May 2020 for a duration of three years, as detailed in this report.
2. Direct the City Clerk to sign the applicable agreement on behalf of the City, once the agreement has been reviewed and approved by the City Solicitor, and upon approval by the Students Union of the University of Regina board of governors.
3. Approve an increase of \$360,610 to Transit & Fleet's budget for 2021, which will be offset by the revenue collected from URSU.
4. Approve this report at its January 29, 2020 meeting.

ISSUE

This report outlines the parameters for a U-Pass during the spring and summer semesters with the University of Regina Students Union (URSU) at the University of Regina. This U-Pass program would begin in May 2020. As this is not in the 2020 budget, Administration will include these figures in the 2021 budget, subject to Council approval.

IMPACTS

Accessibility Impact

Registered paratransit customers who attend the University of Regina are also eligible to use the U-Pass on paratransit service. There has been an average of 80 paratransit trips taken each month using the U-Pass card during each of the fall and winter semesters.

Financial Impact

The understanding in place with URSU ensures that 100 per cent of the cost will be recovered (\$360,610 per semester) for the program over a three-year period. In 2020, Administration will variance the revenue and expenses associated with this program. Administration will submit a budget request for 2021 to adjust Transit's budget for this program. The total operating increase that will be requested for 2021 will be for one full time equivalent bus operator (\$65,600). The remaining \$295,000 is an adjustment to decrease transit pass revenue and increase U-Pass revenue by \$360,610.

Policy/Strategic Impact

The implementation of a U-Pass helps achieve the transportation goals and policies in *Design Regina: The Official Community Plan* and specifically, "Goal 1: Financial Principals – "Use a consistent approach to funding the operation of the City of Regina" in Section B.

Policy 1.2: Consider, except where prohibited by *The Cities Act* or other regulations and where appropriate, establishing user fees and other similar charges in excess of full cost recovery for the program or service to which the fees apply. Such resources shall be considered and general revenues for the payment of costs associated with public benefits are shared city-wide.

This also achieves goals from the Transportation Master Plan in particular:

- 3.28 Use education and promotional campaigns to increase the awareness of transit services, their benefits, and the value to the community.
- 3.33 Evaluate the potential for the use of loyalty or discount programs to encourage the use of transit.

OTHER OPTIONS

Administration recommends that we proceed with an agreement for the provision of a spring and summer U-Pass with URSU. The alternative is not to proceed with a spring and summer agreement and continue with only the current fall and winter U-Pass until 2023. This would allow a new contract to be negotiated with URSU to include the spring and summer pass as well. However, this would delay any sort of U-Pass for spring and summer students for three years.

COMMUNICATIONS

If approved, Administration will support URSU to promote this new pass.

DISCUSSION

The current U-Pass agreement with URSU covers the fall and winter semesters (September to April). Having seen the success of the fall and winter program, and since received student requests to implement a spring and summer U-Pass, URSU held a referendum in March 2019, asking the following questions of the students they represent:

Should the URSU negotiate a U-Pass for the Spring/Summer semester that will;

- *Cost every student enrolled in on-campus Spring/Summer semester courses no more than \$99 for the semester;*
- *Provide unlimited access to Regina Transit and, when eligible, Paratransit services for URSU members in the Spring/Summer semesters; and,*
- *Have the same opt-out options as the existing Fall and Winter semester programs?*

There was a total of 16,550 eligible voters, with 1,844 students (85 percent of those who voted) voted in favour and 323 students (15 percent of those who voted) voted against. Based on the results, Administration met with URSU and discussed what the parameters of a spring and summer U-Pass Program could look like. The agreed upon points closely resemble the current fall and winter agreement with URSU. Appendix A contains the original spring and summer memorandum of intent signed with URSU. The following is a summary of the major points of the memorandum.

- **A three-year agreement commencing May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2023.** The intent is to have both the fall and winter U-Pass expire at the same time as the spring and summer U-Pass. Future agreements could be combined to include a year-round U-Pass.
- **The U-Pass is active during spring and summer semesters which would span approximately from May 1 to August 31 each year.** These dates would ensure there is a U-Pass available year-round for students going to the University of Regina.
- **URSU will set student fees based on the price of the program from Transit & Fleet.** This provision is the same as the current fall and winter agreement, where URSU sets the unit price per student based on the lump sum payment they pay to the City.
- **URSU will pay Transit & Fleet a lump sum payment for the U-Pass program paid July 1 of each year in the amount of \$360,610.** This cost includes lost revenue, plus the cost of additional service for the program detailed below. This cost represents a 100 per cent cost recovery for the City.
- **Starting May 2021, 3 per cent will be added to annual amount charged to URSU for the life of the agreement.** The increase in cost is to ensure we maintain 100 per cent cost recovery on the program.
- **Additional service will be added in during the spring/summer U-Pass. The additional service will be:**

- **One trip at 10 p.m. weekdays on Routes 21 and 22.**
- **One additional trip after 6 p.m. on weekdays on Routes 21 and 22.** This will be 300 additional service hours.

This additional service does not require any additional buses but will require one additional bus operator, which has been factored into the cost of the service. Transit does anticipate ridership to increase as the spring and summer months are the lowest ridership months. In addition, there is current capacity to handle the expected ridership increase.

Since implementation of the U-Pass in September 2016, transit ridership among post-secondary students has increased each year. The participation rate of students loading their bus pass also increased each semester with 48 per cent of eligible students activating their bus pass. This participation and increased ridership can be seen in Appendix B.

The current cost charged by URSU to each student is \$87.60 for each semester. If a student were paying regular pass fare for the four months, it would cost \$312 per semester for the student.

DECISION HISTORY

In September 2015, Council approved of a seven-year contract with the University of Regina Students' Union (URSU) to provide a U-Pass Program for the fall and winter semesters (report CR15-98). Students attending the University of Regina during these semesters are eligible to obtain the U-Pass. The fees paid by URSU to the City covers 100 per cent of the cost.

The City purchased five buses to support the U-Pass program. At the same time, more than 3,200 hours of bus service were added to the system to enhance the current service. This service was available for all transit customers to use.

The recommendations contained in this report require Council approval.

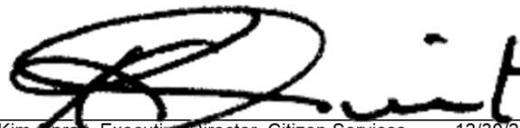
Respectfully Submitted,



Brad Bells, Director, Transit & Fleet

12/17/2019

Respectfully Submitted,



Kim Onra, Executive Director, Citizen Services

12/30/2019

Prepared by: Nathan Luhning, Manager of Transit Administration

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A

Appendix B