

Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology U-Pass Program

Date	February 17, 2021
To	Operations and Community Services Committee
From	Citizen Services
Service Area	Transit & Fleet
Item No.	OCS21-8

RECOMMENDATION

The Operations and Community Services Committee recommends that City Council:

1. Authorize the Executive Director of Citizen Services (or designate) to negotiate and approve a two year agreement with the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT) for a U-Pass program, any amendments to that agreement and the authority to extend the agreement for any additional terms as determined appropriate by the Executive Director.
2. Authorize 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.
3. Approve these recommendations at its meeting on February 24, 2021.

ISSUE

The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) currently has a U-Pass agreement in place with the City of Regina that spans from September 2018 to June 2021. SIIT would like to renew the U-pass agreement for an additional two years starting September 1, 2021.

IMPACTS

Accessibility Impact

The entire Transit fleet of 121 buses are fully accessible.

Financial Impact

The SIIT U-Pass program is a full cost recovery program effective September 2021 and no additional resources are needed. The agreement includes a 3 per cent increase applied in 2022 to cover any increase to costs. The agreed upon financial terms can be found in Appendix A.

Policy/Strategic Impact

The Transit and Fleet department has seen a significant increase in post secondary ridership as a result of the implementation of the U-Pass programs at SIIT and the University of Regina. Although the University of Regina has currently shifted courses to online learning in response to COVID-19, SIIT is able to retain on-campus learning for the time being, therefore U-Passes are still being used extensively by students. Renewing the SIIT U-Pass program will continue to positively impact ridership by cultivating and maintaining a new generation of transit riders. A graph of recent post-secondary ridership can be found in Appendix B.

A U-Pass program supports the recommended actions in the Transportation Master Plan, specifically:

3.33 Evaluate the potential for the use of loyalty or discount programs to encourage the use of transit.

OTHER OPTIONS

One option is to not renew the SIIT U-Pass program, which would then require students to purchase a monthly bus pass at regular rates of \$78 per month (\$780 for two semesters). Currently SIIT shares the cost of the program with students and each student under this agreement pays \$250 for two semesters. This is a savings of \$530 each year for students with regards to transportation.

There is a risk associated with not renewing this program, in that there could be a reduction in student ridership due to the expense increasing and not being feasible for some. As a result, Administration does not recommend this approach as the program does help students financially and it also promotes the use of public transportation within our city, which in the long-term, will improve its environmental footprint.

COMMUNICATIONS

SIIT communicates directly with students on this program. There will be no need for any formal communication from the City of Regina.

DISCUSSION

In May 2017, SIIT Administration approached the Transit and Fleet department about a U-Pass program in Regina as they had a U-Pass program at the SIIT location in Saskatoon. It was determined that since the Regina campus was smaller than Saskatoon's with about

140 students, the Transit system could manage the increased ridership and would not require any additional buses to accommodate the new program. As a result, Council approved a three-year agreement (September 2018 to June 30, 2021) between SIIT and the City of Regina. The program has worked well for both parties with students receiving a discounted bus pass, and Regina Transit seeing increased ridership in post-secondary students during that time.

SIIT would like to renew the U-Pass agreement for another two years. Administration has met with SIIT and discussed the parameters for the agreement. The current non-binding Memorandum of Intent (MOI) for the SIIT U-Pass agreement is in Appendix A. The MOI sets out the key terms that will form the basis of a legal agreement for the U-Pass program, should both parties receive approval from their respective organizations to proceed with an agreement. A summary of the items includes:

- **SIIT will set student fees based on the price of the program from the Transit and Fleet department.** SIIT's fees for year one is \$36,000. This amount will be paid in two lump sum payments each semester at \$18,000 per semester. This payment process is the same as previous years.
- **SIIT will be responsible for collecting fees from students and will handle any exemptions.** This ensures the additional administrative requirements rest with SIIT and not the City.
- **SIIT will notify the Transit and Fleet department of any lost or stolen passes so they can be deactivated.** This will help control any abuse of the U-Pass system.
- **The Transit and Fleet department will supply SIIT with U-Pass cards with smart card technology that will act as a bus pass and student ID.** This will provide an all-in-one card that students can use at SIIT and also acts as a bus pass. Students will be required to swipe their pass on the bus and electronic ridership data will be captured.
- **The U-Pass will only be active during the fall/winter semesters.** The U-Pass will only be active during two semesters, starting from September to June.
- **Starting September 2022, a 3 per cent increase will be applied to the lump sum for the life of the agreement.** This is to account for any increase in the cost of operating expenses during the life of the agreement.
- **Two Year Agreement – September 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023.** A short contract was desired as SIIT may be moving facilities in the near future.

DECISION HISTORY

In November 2017, Council approved a three-year agreement (September 2018 to June 30, 2021) between SIIT and the City of Regina (CR17-123).

Respectfully submitted,

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Brad Bells, Director, Transit & Fleet

1/26/2021



Kim Conra, Executive Director, Citizen Services

2/11/2021

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - SIIT U-Pass Memorandum of Intent

Appendix B - Post Secondary Student Ridership