



Senate of the Associated Students of the University of Nevada

88th Session, 2020-2021

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH EDPASS

Bill Number: 22

Authored By: Senator Luers and Senator Supple

Sponsored By: The Committee on Government Operations

Whereas, EDPASS is a partnership between the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) and higher education institutions to provide discounted public transportation to higher education students;

Whereas, public transportation is defined as a system of buses, trains, or subways, that are available to the general public, may require a fare, and run at scheduled times;¹

Whereas, the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Washoe County's mission is to provide "quality transportation systems... that meet the community's present and future needs;"²

Whereas, many college towns have incorporated EDPASS transportation programs, either university-run or in partnership with a local transportation service, in which they provide all students with access to the transportation system at a very low cost;

Whereas, institutions such as Northwestern University³, University of Utah⁴, UC Davis⁵, Washington State University⁶, and others provide local bus services to students free of charge⁷;

Whereas, RTC Washoe began piloting a EDPASS transportation program with UNR on July 1, 2019;

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/policy/hst/hi5/publictransportation/index.html>

² <https://www.rtcwashoe.com/about/>

³ <https://www.northwestern.edu/offcampus/resources/getting-around/public-train-bus-transportation/index.html>

⁴ <https://utahglobal.utah.edu/salt-lake-city-living/travel-and-transportation/>

⁵ <https://www.ucdavis.edu/campus-life/explore-campus/transportation/>

⁶ <https://wsu.edu/life/transportation/>

⁷ <http://nap.edu/25052>

Whereas, this pilot program, which provides all UNR undergraduate students with access to the entire RTC Washoe bus system, has been funded by a public grant received by RTC for the first year until comprehensive data and a source of student funding;

Whereas, among universities with EDPASS transit programs, “student transit ridership increased from 35% to 200%, and a corresponding decrease in auto usage that ranged from 20% to 70% in the first year of the program;”⁸

Whereas, RTC ridership among undergraduate students at UNR has gone up 130% since the start of the pilot program on July 1st;

Whereas, not only does EDPASS increase ridership, it also increases environmental sustainability and safety;

Whereas, according to a 2014 city-wide greenhouse gas inventory in partnership with the university, transportation accounted for 30% of climate-related emissions, 83% coming from vehicle use;⁹

Whereas, for every passenger mile traveled, public transportation produces 95% less carbon monoxide, 92% less volatile organic compounds, and 50% less carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides;¹⁰

Whereas, public transportation is overall a relatively safe and secure mode of transport with about a tenth of the traffic casualty rate and lower overall crime rates than automobile travel;¹¹

Whereas, according to No Walls 2025 on breaking down the accessible wall, we must, “Work with the Reno Transportation Commission to ensure the Virginia Street Rapid Transit Expansion project is a success,” “Create alternative transportation options for students to and from campus,” and “Encourage and incentivize students to use alternative transportation options;”¹²

Whereas, RTC is also planning to build a new bus station on the intersection of E Eighth St and N Virginia St;

Whereas, RTC is also conducting a transportation survey of the Gateway District to improve

⁸ <http://nap.edu/25052>

⁹ <https://www.reno.gov/community/sustainability/climate-energy>

¹⁰ <https://www.cdc.gov/policy/hst/hi5/publictransportation/index.html>

¹¹ <https://www.vtppi.org/safer.pdf>

¹² <http://de5u0yfu98nbk.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/02142829/No-Walls-2025-AStudentVisOnForTheUniversityOfNevadaReno1.pdf>

their services around the university;¹³

Whereas, EDPASS programs are meant to benefit local transportation services rather than compete with them, improving the local transportation system is beneficial to the student body;

Whereas, the 2019 Campus Climate Survey indicated that nearly 50% of respondents have a commute time of ten minutes or longer to the university;¹⁴

Whereas, the EDPASS system would provide an alternative mode of transportation for students who normally would not be able to commute to campus freely and independently;

Whereas, for future years, EDPASS will require a small amount of funding from the university with a subsidy from RTC;

Whereas, a simple \$4 fee to undergraduate students would provide free transportation to any student for the semester;

Be it enacted, that a question seeking approval of voters shall appear on the ballot for the 2021 General Election as follows: “Shall the students of UNR add a \$3.50 per semester fee to pay for the EDPASS system?”

Be it further enacted, pursuant to the passage of the ballot question by the student body, the fee will be brought to the Board of Regents for consideration at their December meeting.

Adopted in Senate on February 3rd, 2021

Attest:

Keegan Murphy, Speaker of the Senate

Dominique Hall, President of the Associated Students

I certify that this Act originated in the Senate.

Hope Cronan, Senate Secretary

¹³ <https://www.rtcwashoe.com/mpo-corridor-plan/rtc-university-area-transportation-study/>

¹⁴ <https://www.unr.edu/main/pdfs/verified-accessible/divisions-offices/president/truth/climate-study-final-report.pdf>