



Kriss Worthington

Councilmember, City of Berkeley District 7

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REVISED

ACTION CALENDAR

July 25, 2005

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Subject: Support for a Successful and Equitable Class Pass Program

RECOMMENDATION:

The City of Berkeley recognizes the importance of the University's Class Pass program, and therefore the City will send a letter to the UC Berkeley Chancellor urging the administration to delay approval of final referendum language until student concerns about the substantial proposed increases in the Class Pass fee are addressed.

Due to increased cost, possible appearance of unfairness, and decreased service, the Class Pass might be defeated in the referendum, which would be an enormous setback to the University's transportation program. The City also recognizes that student fees have increased considerably over the past few years and the proposed Class Pass fee increase contributes to this overall significant increase.

The City is also concerned about the proposed increase for funding the Bear Transit shuttle system and a \$ 1.50 fee for Translink implementation, when the University has alternate funding sources to pay for these costs.

To facilitate successful resolution of this issue, the City requests that the University promptly provide the ASUC with a copy of the Bear Transit user survey and the accompanying financial analysis for this program.

BACKGROUND:

In April 1999, UC Berkeley students approved a referendum creating the Class Pass program, which provides unlimited rides on AC Transit local and Transbay lines for a semester fee. The fee initially adopted by students was \$ 18.00.

The Class Pass has been a model for alternative transportation programs, and has been widely used by students. Additionally, some students have given up driving to campus and take AC Transit instead. The number of students who currently purchase parking permits from the University is 12 percent. This number has decreased since the Class Pass has been in operation.

The program is a critical part of the campus transportation system. While, the University has invested in building more parking, through this program the campus is promoting a sustainable and cost effective method of access for its community.

Based on the success of this program, in November 2002, students continued the Class Pass program for another three years, approving a fee of \$ 34.20 a semester. Students approved the fee overwhelmingly by 88.4 percent.

Since the Class Pass was last renegotiated, student fees have increased considerably. Additionally, financial hardships have forced the University to reduce the scope of some student services.

Nevertheless this has not affected the University's increased development of parking spaces. As opposed to continuing to fund alternative transportation, some faculty members have advocated for using parking funds for only parking construction and operation. This ultimately compelled the administration, last year to rescind the use of parking permit fees from transit operations. However, the administration recently approved an increase in parking permits by 4.5 percent over the next 15 years.

The campus shuttle system is another integral component to the University's transportation program. UC runs several daytime and nighttime shuttles, including the Perimeter and Reverse Perimeter shuttles.

Transit is paid by a number of sources including parking citations; permit revenue and a student contribution through the Class Pass.

With the Class Pass referendum scheduled in November, UC Berkeley students have been meeting with the University to negotiate the new model. While students agree with an increase in AC Transit's portion of the fee, there has been concern over a substantial increase in the student contribution to the Bear Transit system and a fee for Translink implementation.

With the lack of permit revenue, this has forced students to bear an unnecessary burden to support transit on campus. Both students and University faculty and employees benefit from these shuttles, and to place the responsibility so heavily on students is inequitable.

Accordingly, it is questionable whether the majority of students would support paying for parking over transit. The ASUC Senate has opposed these increases and urged the University to support an equitable proposal.

The City benefits greatly from this program by reducing the number of student drivers who would otherwise use residential parking spaces and by reducing congestion and air pollution throughout the city. Accordingly, it is important that the City support student efforts and urge the University to promote a successful and equitable Class Pass model.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

NONE

CONTACT PERSON:

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