28 April 2020

To: Dr. Edward McCauley, PhD, FRSC, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Calgary

From: Russell Davies, A/Director, Calgary Transit

Re: Post-Secondary Student Eligibility for the Fair Entry Program

Thank you for your April 21 inquiry to The City of Calgary Community Support Task Force submitted jointly with the Students’ Union and Graduate Students’ Association. As a member of the task force and a representative of the service line featuring prominently in your Fair Entry inquiry, Calgary Transit has been asked to coordinate The City’s response.

We recognize the challenges in the economic situation faced by many Calgarians including students due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are pleased to hear of the Federal Government’s recent financial support for post-secondary students and recent graduates to help them continue their studies in the fall and help many get the experience they need to start their careers.

It is regrettable that the UPass is unavailable for all students for the Spring/Summer 2020 session due the COVID-19 emergency as classes are being delivered via eLearning as advised by the University of Calgary. The delivery of the UPass program is based on The City’s recovery of the cost of the service from the university through the UPass fee assessment from all registered full-time students for the semester.

The Fair Entry program encompasses five subsidy programs serving some 112,000 participants. As such, policy decisions are made in consideration of the impact to all population groups that we serve. Subsidy programs are currently reviewing business rules to determine if modifications are required for their service delivery. This will include possible modifications to address barriers in obtaining income proofs that are reflective of current income levels.

For Property Tax Assistance Program (PTAP) that was specifically referenced in your letter, property tax payment deadlines have been extended from June 30 to September 30, 2020 so students will not face a penalty before that deadline.

A waiver of Fair Entry requirement for one population group is not possible at this time. However, your input will be considered as part of our ongoing review to reduce barriers to participation for all current and potential program participants. We will communicate to all concerned when Fair Entry program modifications are instituted.

Sincerely,

Russell Davies, P.Eng.
A/Director, Calgary Transit

cc: Jessica Revington, President, Students’ Union
Mohammad Mansouri, President, Graduate Students’ Association
Doug Morgan, A/General Manager Transportation
Katie Black, General Manager Community Services
Debbie Belgrave, Fair Entry Coordinator
Andrew McIntyre, Senior Policy Advisor, Mayor’s Office
Rob Wiles, Issues Strategist, Calgary Neighbourhoods
Jessica Park, Government Relations Specialist (Municipal Affairs)