

AURARIA RTD PASS PROGRAM FAQ

- Why must there be a new referendum vote?

The previous student referendum, held in 2008, allowed for two, one-year renewals of the RTD Pass Program agreement, assuming that the pass price did not exceed \$37 per student, per semester for academic year 2008-2009, and \$39 for the 2009-2010 academic year. The RTD Board's decision to increase general fares significantly, along with a large increase in Auraria's student ridership, are causing the total cost of the agreement to go up nearly 30%.

- Why is the contract (and pass) price going up?

As a result of higher fuel costs, the RTD Board of Directors voted in fall 2008 to raise all of their cash fares by \$.25 on local routes, and \$.50 on express and regional routes, effective January 1, 2009. This means that the Local fare, for example, has gone up 14% (from \$1.75 to \$2.00). Local routes are also the most heavily used by Auraria students, with over 2 million rides last year. Express fares have risen from \$3.00 to \$3.50, and Regional fares have risen from \$4.00 to \$4.50

The Auraria student pass program agreement is calculated based upon the total number of rides taken by students in the prior year, multiplied by the current cash fare (minus a 45% discount). Auraria students took almost 2.8 million rides last year. This is the same formula that is used to calculate the College Pass for other schools, including CU-Boulder.

- How does ridership by students affect the pass price?

The AHEC/RTD agreement is priced based on actual ridership numbers, charged at a discount off of the regular cash fares. The most recent ridership data (September 2007 to August 2008) is used to calculate the 2009-2010 pass agreement. Ridership has changed in the following ways from the 2006-2007 numbers:

- Total Ridership is up 12.0%
- Bus Ridership is up 18.9%
- Light Rail Ridership is up 4.2%

Light rail ridership has increased in conjunction with the opening of the SE Light Rail through TREX. Also, when RTD opened the new rail lines, they did redistricting of the fare zones, which has pushed some riders in to a more expensive fare bracket. This past year also saw significant increases in the price of fuel, leading more students to ride transit. The number of cars parked at Auraria during this period fell.

- Is this still a good deal for students?

The RTD pass through the Auraria student pass program is still a great value for students at \$46 per semester. A similar pass for the general public would cost \$164 per month, or approximately \$656 per semester. The lowest monthly pass available (local only) would cost \$70 per month, or \$280 per semester.