

Increase Affordability in Transportation for UBC Students and Staff  
Members:

Formal Report

For

AMS Council & Committee

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## Introduction

### A. Definition

Affordable transportation refers to the ability of individuals or households to access modes of transportation without experiencing a significant financial burden. This includes access to public transportation, personal vehicles, or alternative forms of transportation such as cycling or walking.

### B. Background information about affordable transportation

The availability of affordable transportation has numerous benefits for individuals, communities, and the economy at large (Litman, 2013). One of the primary benefits of affordable transportation is that it increases access to employment opportunities, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and other essential services that society heavily relies upon. This, in turn, can help our communities improve by rectifying issues with poverty, increasing economic mobility for people and their families, and becoming a more progressive society (Litman, 2013). Additionally, affordable transportation can reduce traffic congestion and air pollution, which can have significant environmental and health benefits.

On the other hand, there are significant barriers to accessing affordable transportation, particularly for full-time students and low-income individuals. For example, one of the most significant barriers is the increasing cost of transportation due to rising fuel prices, vehicle maintenance costs, and public transportation fares (Mueller, 2015). As a result, this can lead to reduced access to essential services and increased financial burden for those who cannot afford a personal vehicle or pay for public transportation.

Moreover, transportation affordability is also affected by other factors, such as access to affordable housing, employment opportunities, and transportation infrastructure. Addressing these barriers is crucial to ensure everyone can access affordable and efficient transportation, leading to a more productive and thriving economy.

### C. Motivation & Intended Audience

For this formal report, my motivation is to tackle the issue of the rising cost of transportation and provide potential solutions to ensure affordable transportation is put in place and maintained. With this formal report, my intended audience includes the AMS Council and the current UBC President, Deborah Buszard, as these individuals can consider my proposal holistically and implement the suggestions presented in this formal report.

#### D. Data & Method

This formal report's primary data source is an anonymous survey distributed among UBC students and staff members. Furthermore, a set of interview questions has been sent to the AMS committee and the current president of UBC, Deborah Buszard, inquiring about the current state of UBC's stance on the increase in transportation costs and its current plans to assist with this issue.

The secondary data include a literature review from Statistics Canada, examining the inflationary trend of transportation costs within Canada and the historical trends of people utilizing public transportation. Along with the statistical assessment, articles from reliable news outlets such as CTV, CBC, and the Daily Hive are incorporated to supplement the inquiry.

#### E. Scope of Inquiry

To form the driving motivation behind this report, the scope of inquiry is as follows:

1. How much revenue does UBC's parking generate annually?
2. Are there any possibilities of creating discount prices for UBC students and staff members with car rental companies already associated with UBC, such as Evo?
3. What are some of UBC's plans to help promote affordability in transportation methods for students and staff members who commute to the school daily?
4. What additional resources will UBC require to create an accessible web page for all possible transportation?
5. Has there been an increase in demand for parking passes at UBC? If so, by how much or how much has it decreased?

6. Is UBC's current agreement with Translink reviewed annually? Are there ways to re-negotiate terms to lower the cost of bus passes?

## Data Section

### A. Overview of current methods of transportation and prices

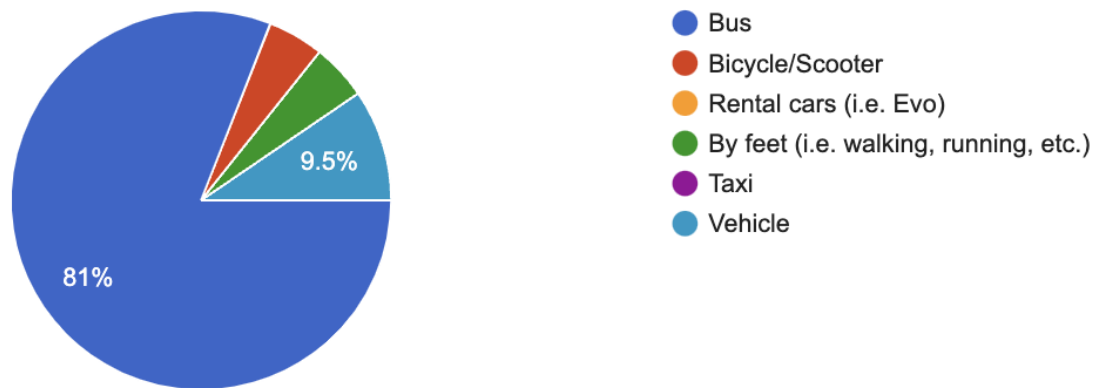
As of 2021, transportation in Vancouver, British Columbia, includes a mix of public transportation options, cycling infrastructure, and roadways. However, for students and staff members, public transportation provided by Translink, operating buses, trains, and ferries throughout Metro Vancouver, is the most common method of transportation (Dailyhive, 2023). Other popular transportation methods include a more recent phenomenon in rental cars such as Evo, car sharing in UBER and Lyft, cycling, and Taxis.

With Translink being the most common transportation in Vancouver for student and staff members, the cost of using Translink's transportation is split up into three zones, where Zone 1 is priced at \$2.50, Zone 2 is priced at \$3.65, and Zone 3 is priced at \$4.07. However, the current price is already a 2% increase from 2020, and another 2.3% increase in price is in place for the following year, 2024 (CityNews, 2023).

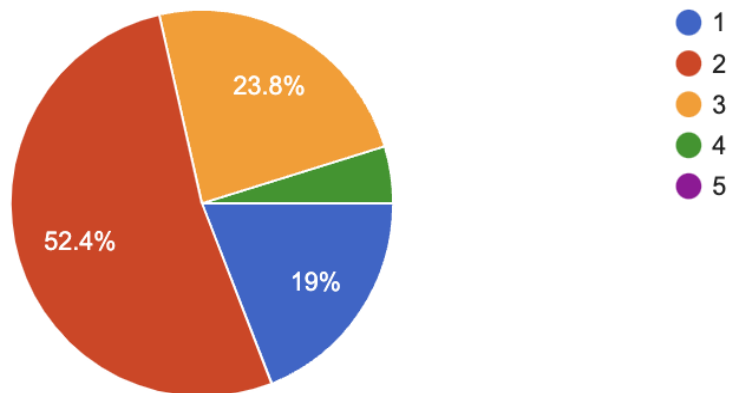
For rental car companies like Evo, the average hourly price is \$17.99. However, this is a current increase from a previous price average of \$14.99 in 2019 (CityNews, 2023). With Uber, the current price per ride is 0.33 cents per minute. However, Uber also increased its price by 5%.

### B. Analysis of Student Surveys

According to the survey, 81% of the responders take the Bus as their main means of transportation (Figure 1). However, more than half (52.4%) of the respondents are not very satisfied with the transportation system in place (Figure 2).

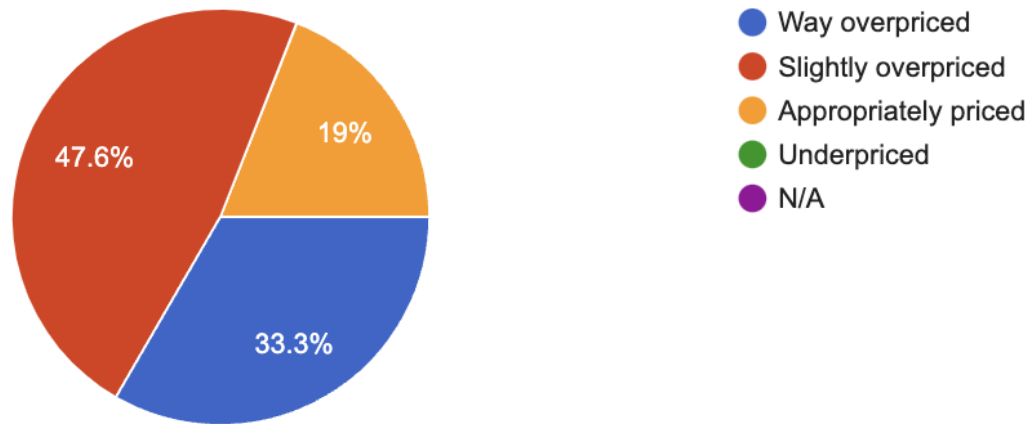


(Figure 1)



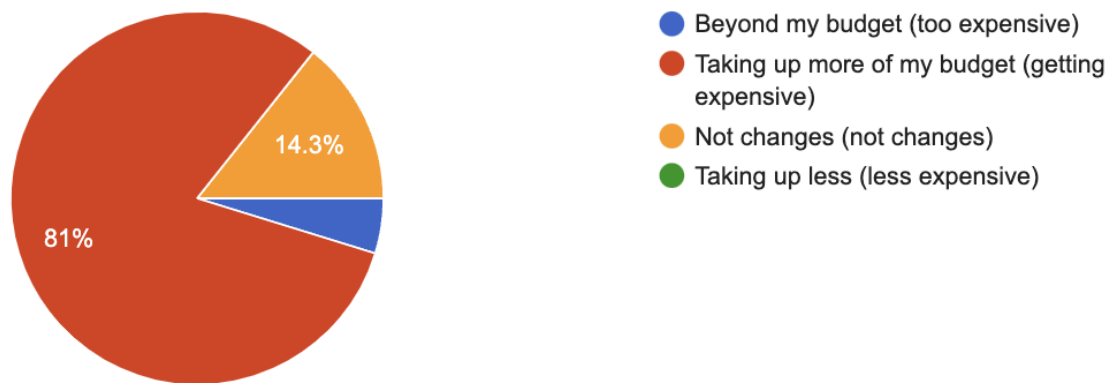
(Figure 2)

Figure 3 illustrates how the students feel about the current pricing of transportation. Figure 3 indicates that 47.6% of respondents feel that it is slightly overpriced, and 33.3% of respondents feel its is way overpriced.



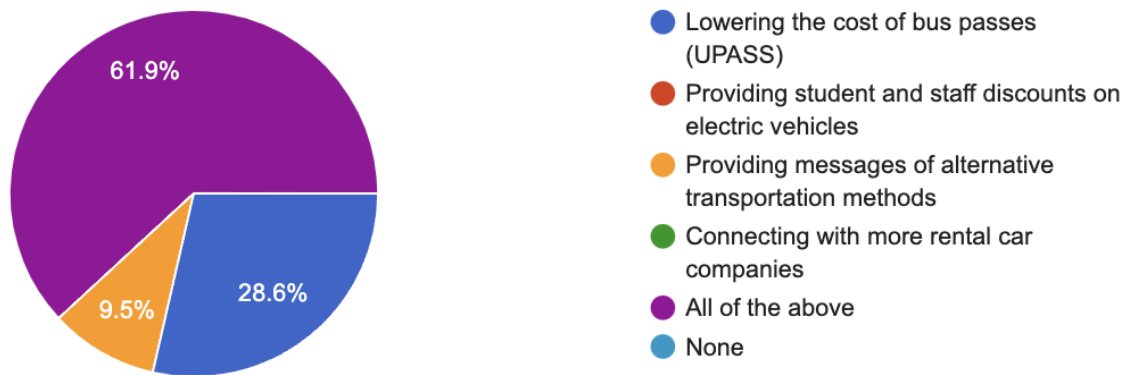
(Figure 3)

Figure 4 shows that 81% of respondents report that the current trend of transportation is taking up more within their budget compared to the past.



(Figure 4)

Figure 5 illustrates that 61.9% of respondents are motivated to see improvements in all areas, including lowering the cost of bus passes, providing student and staff discounts on vehicles, active messaging of alternative transportation methods, and UBC connecting with other car rental companies.



(Figure 5)

Based on these results, from the perspective of UBC students and staff members, the majority want to see improvement in handling the increase in the cost of using transportation. With most respondents indicating that they use the bus as their main form of transportation, UBC’s actions to assist students in this area would be the most beneficial.

#### C. Evaluation of interviews from UBC Stakeholders and AMS Committee

This section is still currently in progress. This formal report is waiting for the response from the AMS Committee and Deborah Buszard.

#### D. Strategies to promote Affordability

In Progress

#### E. Feasibility of recommendations

UBC already has a foundation in place with the right intentions of making transportation more affordable with their partnership with Translink that provides UPASS for student and staff members, and it's allowed the availability of Evo rental cars widely present on campus. However, companies' consistent annual price increases are increasingly making UBC partnerships less impactful. There are two suggestions for UBC to facilitate more affordable transportation for their students. These include:



- 1) Re-negotiating UBC's partnership with Translink UPASS
- 2) Active communication between the school and students on efficient transportation methods

## Conclusion

With the current trends in the increase in costs related to transportation over the past decade (Dailyhive, 2023), and the reliant use of transportation, especially for students and staff members, a directive measure is needed to assist with this issue. Transportation has become critical as it helps facilitate our economy and society (Litman, 2013).

However, inflation across all expenditures has made this necessity more difficult for hard-working individuals, who will be the ones running society, to handle. The cost of living has increased over the past ten years (Gössling, Nicolosi, & Litman, 2021). Transportation costs are one of the main culprits as companies are also navigating the increased pricing in gas, supply chain, and manufacturing (Gössling, Nicolosi, & Litman, 2021).

As a result, large institutions that rely on the many individuals who use transportation, such as UBC, must assist in this matter. It is no secret that UBC has made its efforts with its current plan with Translink, but it is time for an update and to come up with innovative methods to counteract the rising cost of transportation, affecting many people alike.

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