

# RTD Transit Passes for CU Denver Students

April Getz and Karlyn Russell-Carlson

# About us

## **April Getz**

- Master of Urban and Regional Planning student
- Human Centered Transportation Focus
- Transportation planning analyst
- President of APAS - American Planning Association Students, Colorado chapter

## **Karlyn Russell-Carlson**

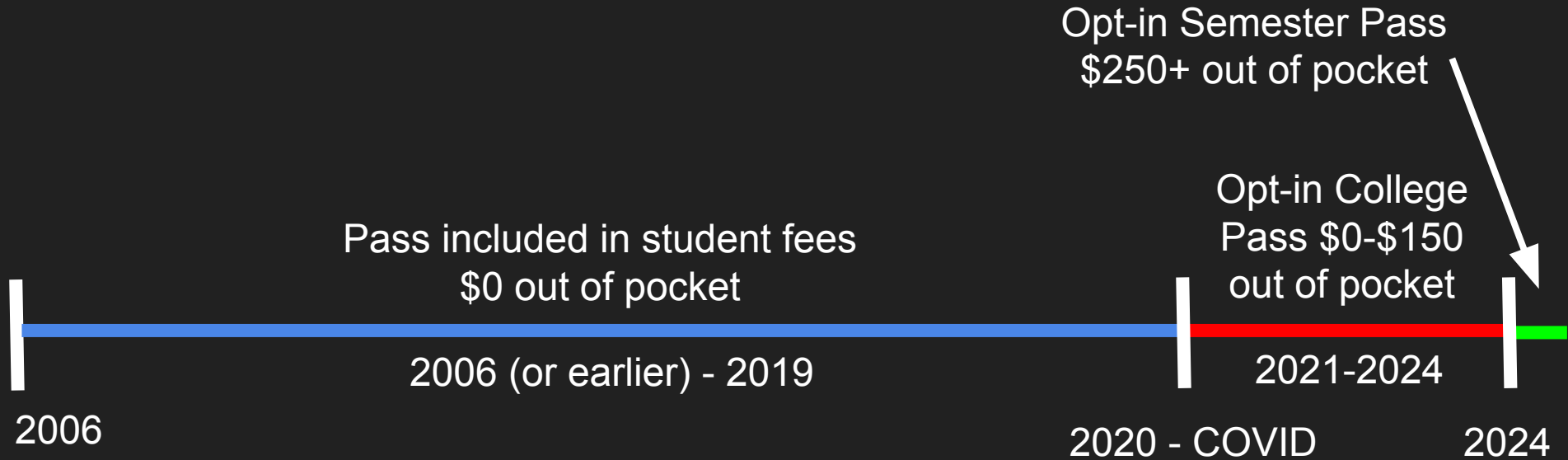
- Master of Urban and Regional Planning student
- Master's Thesis: "Determinants of Public Transit Ridership Recovery Following the COVID-19 Pandemic"
- Human Centered Transportation Research Group
- 2024 FHWA Dwight D. Eisenhower Fellow
- Project and Outreach Coordinator for WTS Colorado - Student Chapter

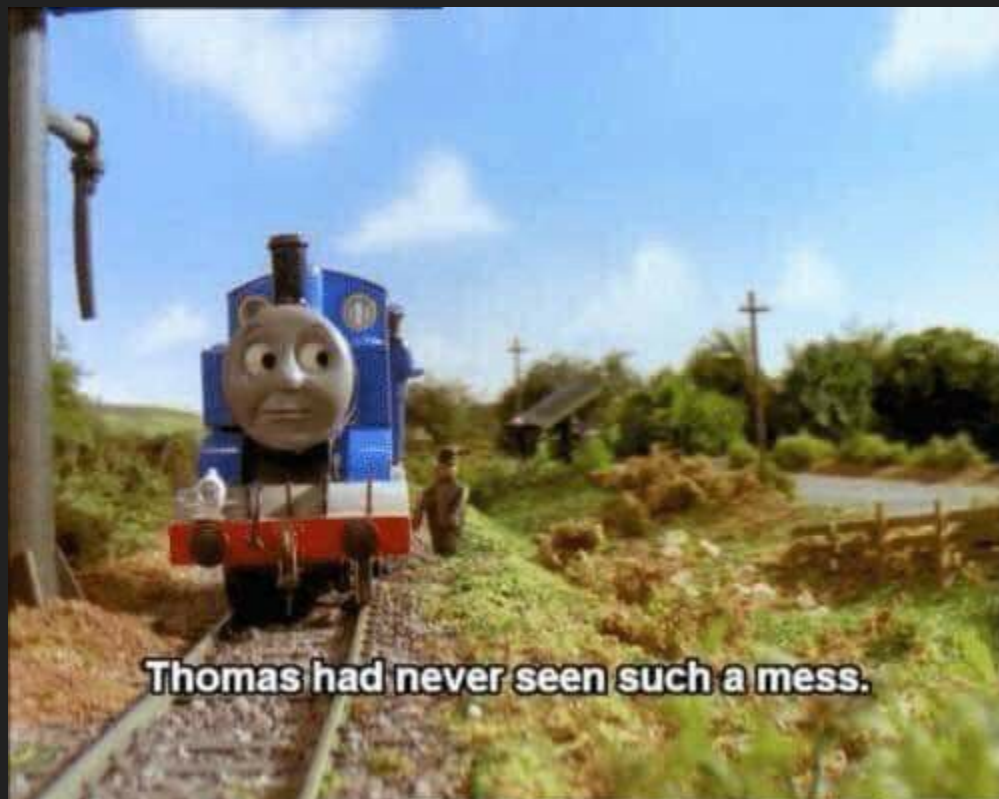
# Agenda

1. What happened to RTD Transit Passes?
2. What happens next?
3. What does the science say?
4. Our asks and recommendations



# 1. What happened to RTD Transit Passes?





**Thomas had never seen such a mess.**

## 2. What happens next?

### No Change

### Pass a Student Fee Referendum

|                                                                                        |                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| “Semester Pass” only for students who can pay                                          | Student fee provides “College Pass” for all                                                         |
| \$250 per semester per student                                                         | Estimate \$25 to \$35 per semester per student                                                      |
| Out-of-pocket payment                                                                  | Financial aid can be used to pay fee                                                                |
| 19 and under do nothing                                                                | Option for 19 and under to opt out online                                                           |
| RTD can raise price at any time without the accountability of a lump sum deal in place | Stable price for 2+ years (RTD is currently willing to negotiate a longer term for a lump-sum deal) |

## 2. What happens next?

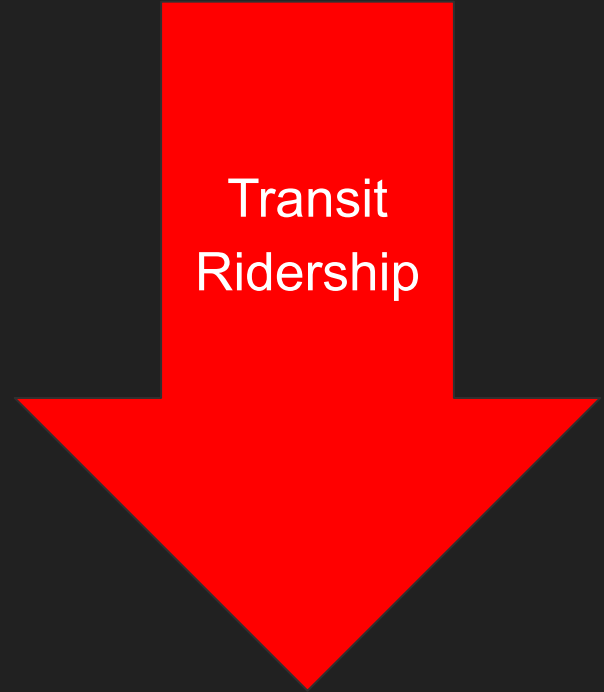
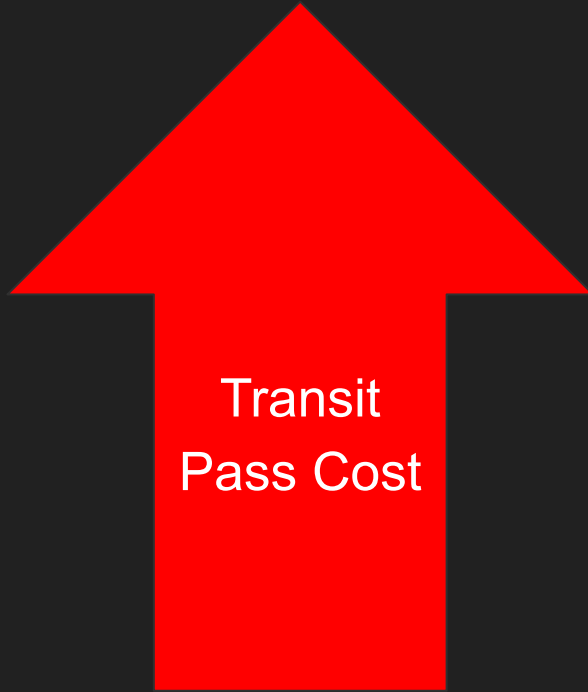
RTD and Auraria Campus are ready to make a much better deal for students... BUT...



= Return of socialized transit pass

they can't make the deal without the reinstatement of the transit student fee, agreed upon by students via referendum.

### 3. What does the science say?

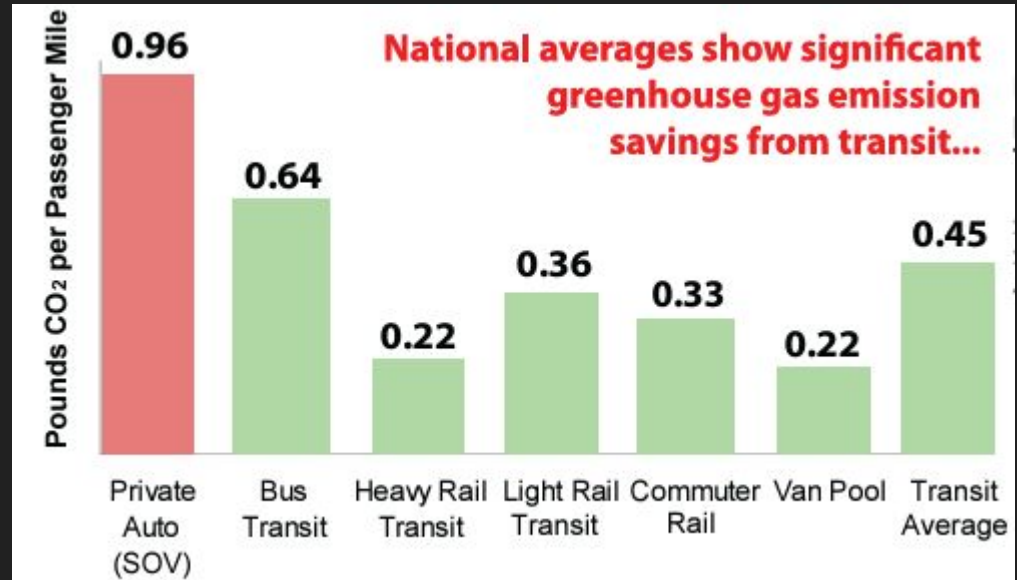




### 3. What does the science say?

Transit has lower emissions per person than cars!

Higher priced passes →  
lower ridership →  
increased emissions



### 3. What does the science say?

Buses and trains are a more efficient way to move large groups of people!

Higher priced passes →  
lower ridership →  
increased congestion



# Equity considerations

Consider the impact on:

- Students with disabilities
- Students without access to a car
- Students who can't afford \$250 without the help of financial aid
- Environmental degradation in and around campus



# Why subsidize transit users?

The cost of car-dependency is HIGH!

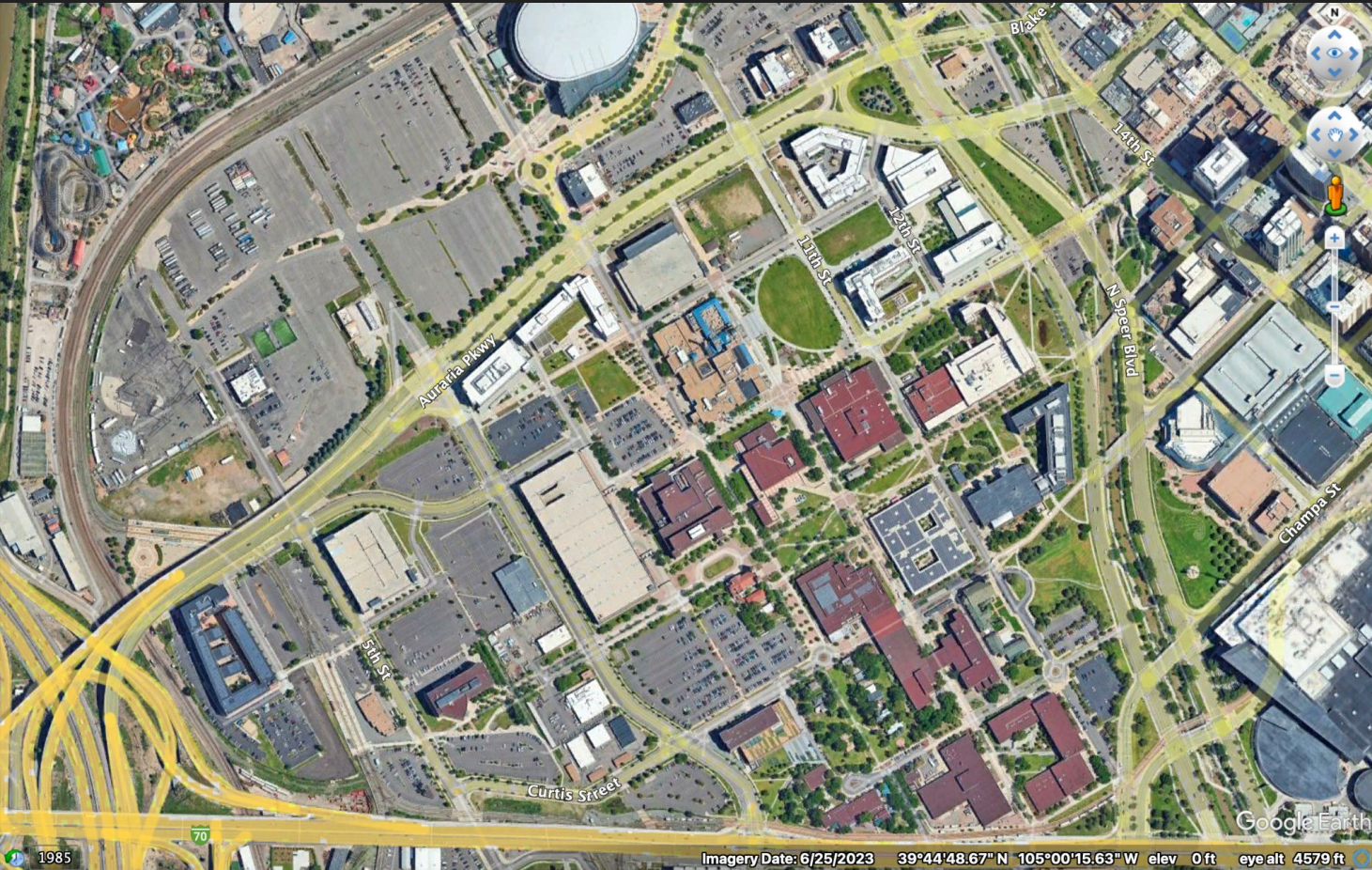
Auraria Campus subsidizes parking cars on-campus by **\$15-20 MILLION**

A.K.A... we subsidize drivers to the tune of **~\$400** per student





# We paved paradise and put up a parking lot



Roughly **half** of our campus land is dedicated to cars.

**Supporting transit...**

Frees up campus land for better purposes

Lowest costs for students

Creates a safer pedestrian environment

## 4. Our asks and recommendations

- Discuss with your constituents!
- Contact us about working on a referendum
- Work with us towards a solution ASAP. We don't have to accept a no-change scenario.



Contact us:  
[Karlyn.Russell-Carlson  
@ucdenver.edu](mailto:Karlyn.Russell-Carlson@ucdenver.edu)  
and  
[April.Getz@ucdenver.edu](mailto:April.Getz@ucdenver.edu)