

BUS GUIDE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Students old and new probably have questions about taking transit in and around Pittsburgh.

We have some answers.



My first time taking the bus as a college freshmen, I was going back to my dorm Downtown from Oakland and didn't know which bus to take or how much it cost (not everyone gets to ride free with their ID).

I spotted a group of other young people who looked familiar and put all my trust in

drunk 18-year-olds who were just as new to the city as I was. I followed the group onto a bus that I was halfway sure would at least take me Downtown. When I got on the bus, all I had was a ten dollar bill, so I shoved it in the fare slot. The bus driver looked at me like I just offered him meth.

"Did you... just put a ten in there?"

"Yep."

"You know it doesn't give change, right?"

"Nope."

If you're a student, old or new, you probably have some transit questions. Don't worry, the City Paper is here to help.

When is the next bus?

There are several apps to help a student plan for a bus ride.

If using Google Maps, click on the bus icon to get a look at arrival times, stop locations, and costs. Moovit is similar, but does better at exactly pinpointing time before a bus arrives. Try the Transit app to best gauge exact bus location, including a map tracking in real-time.

Try not to watch a bus pass by as you're running out the door. It is best to consider all estimates of arrival times as rough guesses. Make use of these apps, just don't necessarily trust them all the time.

Which route?

Students might need to ride a bus for any number of reasons: parties, groceries, exploring, etc. It's important to remember a couple of numbers and the many letters that go with them.

The 61 and 71 busses are students' best friends. All variations travel between Downtown and Oakland, the latter from which they splinter into many directions; letters signify different routes headed east from Oakland. The 61 and 71 busses each can transport students to the following neighborhoods: Shadyside, Squirrel Hill, the Waterfront, Highland Park, Point Breeze, and Regent Square.

How late is too late?

It's the modern-age question: chance taking a bus or catch an Uber or Lyft?

Unfortunately, end-times for buses are inconsistent. Some buses run into the early morning, others stop before 11 p.m. Those 61 and 71 busses are generally going until 1:30 a.m. But lesser popular buses, such as the 58 to Oakland via Greenfield, makes its last trip around 11:20 p.m.

A student never regretted checking the Port Authority's website (portauthority.org) for updated information. Never hurt to carry some of those printed schedules, either.

What does this cost?

Are you a student at any of these universities: Pittsburgh, Chatham, or Carnegie Mellon? If so, consider yourself lucky. A student-identification card from those colleges allows for free transport on all Port Authority vehicles. (And by "free," we mean "built into tuition.")

Students at Point Park, Carlow and Robert Morris are afforded discounted rates during certain times and on holidays. And while that isn't as sweet a deal as the deals for others, it's at least better than paying in full to take transit.

What is full-price for a bus ride? If paying with cash, it's \$2.75 each way. Save 25 cents by purchasing a ConnectCard, which can be recharged at various locations throughout the region. A quarter might not sound like much, but it will seem like gold when you're scouring a laundromat for loose change.