



The Journey

Your source for the latest sustainable transportation news at Mount Royal University

Volume 1, Issue 2

Winter 2010

Why carpool?

Jim Yeo never has to circle the lots to find a parking stall. Beverley Blue has someone else clear the snow off her vehicle. Ashley Côté squeezes in a nap in the car on her way to school. Sound too good to be true? Not if you're a carpooler at Mount Royal.

This year, MRU's carpool stalls were increased from 14 to over 50 stalls, and a parking lot reserved for carpoolers 24 hours a day was created. Next year, the number of carpool stalls will be given another boost: with the parkade scheduled to be completed by next winter, there are plans to put carpool stalls on the first 2 levels, adding a total of 25 more stalls. Additional stalls will also be created in existing parking lots.

If you're still not sure if carpooling is for you, take a look at what some MRU carpoolers have to say about the program. You may be surprised to see that carpooling has more perks than you expected.

Save some \$, grab some Zz's

Ashley Côté happened upon the carpool permit, which gives carpoolers access to reserved stalls, when she went to buy her parking permit. The first year business student carpools from Airdrie every day with a friend, and they "never have a problem" finding a spot. They park in the carpool stalls by Wyckham House, and are pleased at how close they are to campus.

In addition to enjoying the stalls in prime locations, Côté says carpooling is "less stressful." Furthermore, another perk is being able to sleep in the car on the way to school. "Carpooling is very easy," she concludes. "And it's nice to save some money because carpool permits are very affordable [compared to other permits]." Being the same price as an open lot permit, the cost of a carpool permit is cut in half when split between 2 carpool partners, leading to significant savings simply by driving to school with a friend.



The new carpool lot is reserved for carpoolers 24 hours a day.

"It's like being at the movies with your buddies."

Beverley Blue and Jim Yeo, along with their colleagues, probably hold the record for the largest carpool at MRU, at 5 people. "We would be 7, but no one has a vehicle large enough to carry all of us!" Blue proclaims proudly.

Continued on Page 3.

Inside this issue:

Navigate Calgary's public transit system with an interactive website **2**

Retire Your Ride **2**

Al Fedoruk's cycle-to-work year **3**

You're invited to our open house!

Join us at the Parking & Transportation Open House on Tuesday March 9, 2010. Drop by Starbucks at the East Gate between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to get updates about the parkade, new bike shelter, key dates, and more. You will also be able to try the Parking Rate Simulator.

Staff will be on hand to answer questions and receive feedback and suggestions for future transportation projects.

So bring some friends, ideas, and questions, and we'll see you on March 9!



Seeing transit in a whole new way

So you made a new year's resolution to be greener and you want to give public transit a shot, but haven't stepped on a bus since your yellow school bus days?

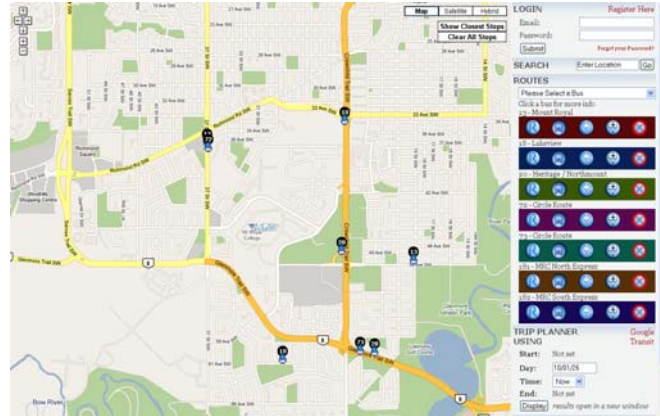
Don't despair: Mount Royal University has a locally developed tool that can help you navigate Calgary's public transit system. Ricardo Hoar, Assistant Professor in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems, has created an interactive website that focuses on new ways to visualize transit data. His research site, <http://transit.mtroyal.ca>, has been up and running for over a year and has a group of faithful followers. Highlights of the site include a mobile feature that allows the user to receive text based schedules, being able to see the routes of your choice overlaid on Google Maps, and browsing stops near your location with a click of a mouse.

Where did Hoar get the idea

for this research project? "Frustration." Hoar, who makes the daily commute to campus from Somerset by C-Train and bus, is familiar with existing transit maps and schedules and admits they can be hard to understand. So he put his frustration to good use, and developed a website that displays transit data in a different way.

Hoar's website is constantly evolving. A recently added feature is delay reporting. This feature allows a transit user to use their cell phone to report if their bus is early, late, or on time. Other transit users have access to the delay reports, so if you see that your bus is running late on a blustery -30C day, you can wait inside a few extra minutes to stay warm.

As for future additions, Hoar would like to develop a trip planner. His website currently uses Google Transit, but Hoar points out that those trip plans are based on schedules and doesn't account for deviations



MRU professor Ricardo Hoar's interactive research site, <http://transit.mtroyal.ca>, helps users navigate Calgary's transit system.

from those set times. However, "almost everyone knows when their local bus is early or late." First-time riders may not be aware of the fluctuations of scheduled times, so with the help of the delay reporting feature, more accurate trip plans can be produced.

Hoar is also working on compiling statistics on how long it takes for transit users to get to MRU by ward, and is developing a login system that will allow users to save

favourite buses and stops. A login system would also help him identify who reports a delay and give his data more integrity: "I can trust them more if they're a regular reporter."

So whether you're a transit newbie or a veteran rider, Hoar's website is a valuable tool that can assist you in navigating Calgary's transit system, and possibly help you keep that new year's resolution too.



Retire Your Ride recycles your old vehicle and rewards you with a discount on a new bike, cash, or transit passes.

Go car-free and choose from rewards of a new bike, cash, or transit passes!

Got your eye on a new bike for the commute to university? You could be eligible for up to \$490 off the purchase price. This, and other great rewards, are all up for grabs when you scrap your vehicle through Retire Your Ride, Canada's national car recycling program.

Retire Your Ride accepts 1995 or older vehicles that are in running condition and have been registered and insured for the past six months. Participants are rewarded with their choice of nine months of Calgary Transit passes, up to \$490 towards a new commuter

bike, \$450 towards an electric bike, or \$300 cash.

Older cars cost more to maintain and are, in most cases, less fuel efficient. They also have a significant environmental impact.

1995 or older vehicles produce 19 times more smog-forming pollution than 2004 or newer vehicles. These vehicles make up one quarter of vehicles driven by Canadians and can generate as much as half the smog-forming pollutants caused by personal vehicle use.

When a vehicle is scrapped through Retire Your Ride, 75 per cent of its content (by weight) is recycled and all operating fluids are safely drained.

More than 50,000 Canadians have already participated in the program, which runs until March 31, 2011.

Climate Change Central runs Retire Your Ride in Alberta. To learn how to scrap your vehicle and get rewards visit www.RetireYourRide.ca or call 1-877-773-1996.

Why carpool?

Continued from Page 1.

Members of the Living Well program, Blue and her friends were in a bind when they discovered parking permits were sold out. When a classmate wondered out loud if carpool permits were also sold out, Blue's interest was piqued, as she hadn't heard of carpool permits before. After inquiring at the Parking Office, she was in luck: she was able to snag the last carpool permit.

Prior to carpooling to campus,

most of Blue and Yeo's carpool partners drove on their own. A few carpooled occasionally, but usually only when someone's car was in the shop for repairs. But after one semester of carpooling, they were hooked and purchased another carpool permit for the following semester. "It has worked out very well," says Yeo. "Even if everyone had their own [parking permit], we'd continue to carpool."

One of Yeo's favourite things about carpooling is that it's

easy to find a parking spot, while Blue enjoys the social aspect. "It's positive. It's fun. It's like being at the movies with your buddies," she says. Furthermore, they take turns sweeping the snow off the vehicle. They haven't encountered any major setbacks, only that it gets "pretty squishy" with 5 people in the vehicle, says Blue.

Overall, Blue believes that the trick to carpooling is to get people to try it: "Once you've done it once or twice, you

figure out that it's not that onerous."

So with Mount Royal's carpool program slated to expand over the years to come, students and staff will have more chances to give carpooling a shot and reap the benefits of MRU's carpool program. Not only does carpooling make sense environmentally and financially, but as Côté put it, "It feels a lot more fun."

2010 is cycle-to-work year

By: Al Fedoruk

Around the end of November last year, the weather was telling me it was time to put my bike away for the winter. So I went back to using transit and driving, and I was completely stressed and frustrated. When I was cycling to campus, it always took 35-40 minutes, every day, no matter what. Driving was taking anywhere from 20 minutes to 2 hours, and transit was even worse.

So I made a vow to bike to work every day in 2010.

I got a third-hand mountain bike, courtesy of colleagues Paul Pospisil and Geoff Owens, outfitted it with lights and

studded tires, and on January 4, I biked to work.

In the first few weeks of my winter commuting, the times for my 12 km commute are very consistently 40-45 minutes. The biggest issue has been the horrible light brown mixture of snow, sand and salt that forms on our roads. If it is more than a few centimeters deep it grabs my wheel and tries to throw me off or it drags me to a complete stop.

The usual reasons for cycling or other 'alternative' forms of transportation are environmental, health, and financial. These are all good



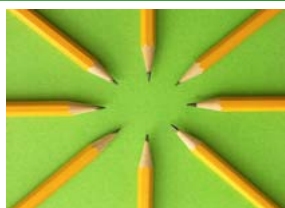
Al Fedoruk has vowed to cycle to work every day in 2010.

reasons, and they do factor into my decision. First and foremost though, cycling is simply the most reliable and least stressful way for me to get to work. And remember how much fun you had on your bike when you were a kid, seeing how fast you can go down a hill or slaloming down a

quiet street? It is still just as much fun.

Al Fedoruk is an assistant professor of computer science at Mount Royal University. He is also a mountaineer, skier, and an urban cyclist who fantasizes about a city without cars.

Follow Al's blog and cycling log at:
<http://blogs.mtroyal.ca/afedoruk>



Commuter Tales: Send us your stories!

Met your true love on the bus? Had a wildlife encounter on your bike ride to campus? We want to hear about it! Send stories (maximum 300 words) about your sustainable commute to athai@mtroyal.ca and your story could be featured in the next newsletter!

Visit us on the web!
www.mtroyal.ca/transportation

To subscribe to this newsletter, e-mail:
Amy Thai, Sustainable Transportation Coordinator
athai@mtroyal.ca