**St. Paul Campus Parking Ramp Update**

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This past May, all Metropolitan State University students were sent an email describing the new parking fees that are effective as of the fall 2015 semester. These fees, reviewed and approved by the Student Senate, will be charged to student accounts at $12 per credit per semester. This standard rate applies to all students, whether online, part time, or full time, and involves all campus locations.

**General parking information**

Though the Saint Paul Campus parking ramp is slated to be complete by late July to early August, it will open two weeks prior to the start of the semester and close a week after the semester ends. During the semester, parking will be available to the public daily, including semester breaks, except when campus is closed for holidays or other events. Parking ramp hours will be 6:30 a.m.–11:30 p.m. on weekdays and 6:30 a.m.–7:30 p.m. on Saturdays. Overnight parking is not allowed.

Students, faculty and staff will use their ID cards to access the parking ramp. New Metro students will automatically receive an updated ID card during orientation. As of August, returning students who own old ID cards will be able to pick up a new ID, free of charge, in the Saint Paul Campus library.

Visitors, guests and the general public will also be able to park in the Saint Paul Campus parking ramp for a $5 daily fee. Those paying the daily fee, however, should plan their visit carefully. “The $5 daily rate does not permit re-entrance on the same date,” said the May email to students. “If visitors leave and return on the same date, they will pay another $5 fee to enter the ramp.”

**How will these changes affect students?**

Students must pay the $12 per credit parking fee, even if they would prefer to park on the street or take the bus. For those who park at the Union Depot lot and take the shuttle to school, this shuttle will be discontinued upon parking ramp completion.

For all those wondering, the parking fee is here to stay, for legal reasons. “State law and MnSCU policy requires that users are charged for parking,” said Anne Sonnee, Metro’s interim vice president. However, the parking ramp brings positive changes to the St. Paul community. “The parking ramp will provide a convenient and safe place to park, [so] we encourage everyone [to be a good neighbor and] use the ramp to reduce the parking on the local streets,” Sonnee added.

Many students, like the author of this article, have used or continue to use the bus to commute to campus. While these students are required to pay the $12 per credit fee, Metro will still provide students with first come, first serve semester bus passes. These passes will be available starting two weeks before the semester begins. It is currently unclear whether or not bus passes will be discounted or sold at a normal rate of $140 per pass.

**Construction updates**

Those looking forward to the opening of the Student Center don’t have to wait much longer! The Center, complete with its various student-oriented facilities, is slated to be complete late October to early November. The Science Education Center is scheduled to open for classes as of the spring 2016 semester.

Further communication on these buildings will be sent throughout the fall semester to students via their school email accounts.

Photo caption:

Metro’s parking ramp is scheduled to be complete by late July or early August.

Photo credit: Kevin Miller