

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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[Q: What VTA services does the SmartPass cover?](#)

A: The Standard SmartPass is valid on all VTA local buses and light rail. The Express SmartPass is valid on all VTA service in addition to the VTA Express bus, Dumbarton Express, Highway 17, and Monterey-Downtown San Jose Express service.

[Q: What does a SmartPass look like and how should it be displayed to VTA Fare Inspectors?](#)

A: The SmartPass is electronically loaded onto a Clipper® card. It is a smart card similar to the size of a credit card that can hold multiple transit agency passes and cash. Upon request of a VTA fare inspector, present your valid Clipper card along with your employer issued staff identification.

[Q: How do I use my SmartPass Clipper card on bus and light rail?](#)

A: Locate the Clipper card device reader upon boarding the front of a bus near the farebox or upon walking onto a light rail platform near a ticket vending machine. Tag your SmartPass card by touching

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the Clipper logo on the reader, making sure to hold the card flat long enough until a single beep is heard and a green light is displayed. After tagging, be sure to have the SmartPass card available upon request a fare inspector while traveling on the light rail system.

Q: Do I need to "tag off" from light rail similar to Caltrain?

A: No. On VTA, you need only to tag your SmartPass prior to each light rail or bus boarding.

Q: I would like to purchase a SmartPass but my employer is not participating in the program, am I eligible to participate?

A: No, you are not eligible to purchase a SmartPass, only employers, residential developments, and colleges within Santa Clara County may purchase a SmartPass. Institutions enter an agreement with VTA to purchase SmartPasses for all their eligible individuals.

Q: I don't plan to use my SmartPass. Can I give or sell it to someone else?

A: No, the SmartPass is nontransferable and is only for the use of the employee to which it is given. Anyone who alters, defaces, transfers or duplicates the SmartPass with the intent to evade the payment of a fare is in violation of the California Penal Code 640 and may be punishable by a fine up to the maximum allowed by law.

Q: Can Institutions purchase SmartPasses for individuals only interested in using public transportation?

A: No. Institutions are required to purchase SmartPasses for all eligible individuals at a given work site. This program requirement allows Institutions a cost-effective way to provide access to public transit to all and at a deeply discounted per person rate.

Q: What does a SmartPass look like and how should it be displayed to VTA Fare Inspectors?

A: A SmartPass is electronically loaded onto a Clipper card similar to the size of a credit card that can hold multiple transit agency passes and cash value. Upon request of a VTA fare inspector, present your valid SmartPass card, and if requested your employer issued identification badge.

Q: I have employees who may be eligible for Paratransit service. Is there also a discount for this service and who should they contact for more information?

A: Employees that have a SmartPass receive a 50% discount for Paratransit service. To receive additional information contact Access Paratransit at (408) 321-2300 (TTY Only: (408) 321-2330). Residents and students are not eligible for the Paratransit discount, please refer to your SmartPass coordinator.

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Q: My residential development where I live is NOT currently participating in the program, may I purchase a SmartPass?

A: No you are not eligible to purchase a SmartPass as an individual, only the residential development that meets the criteria of the SmartPass Program may participate. The development management enters into an agreement with VTA to provide SmartPasses to all of the residents.

Q: As a residential development, can we purchase SmartPasses only for those residents that are interested in using public transportation?

A: No. Residential developments are required to purchase SmartPasses for every resident at a given apartment/townhouse, condominium development or home in a neighborhood association. The deeply-discounted prices were structured to offer communities a cost-effective way to provide access to public transit to all residents as an added amenity.

Q: What types of residential communities may enroll in the SmartPass Program?

A: Any residential development with 25 units or more that is defined by a geographic boundary, such as apartment building or condominium complex, may join the Residential SmartPass Program. Development management MUST purchase a SmartPass for every person 5 years old or older residing within the development.

Q: What geographic boundaries determine the price category under the Downtown San Jose Service Level?

Institutions located north of Highway 280, south of Julian Street, east of Highway 87, and west of 7th Street are considered under the Downtown San Jose Service Level category.

Q: What is the proximity to a light rail station that determines the price category under the Bus & Light Rail Service Level?

Institutions within a ½ mile walking distance to a light rail station are considered under the Bus & Light Rail Service Level category.

Q: I am a SmartPass coordinator, can I view a specific employee's SmartPass usage?

Due to VTA and Clipper's Privacy Policies and in accordance to state and federal privacy laws, SmartPass institutions are restricted to anonymized aggregated utilization data. See SmartPass Institution Portal Training Guide for further details.

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Q: I lost my SmartPass card, what should I do?

Please contact your SmartPass coordinator immediately. All SmartPass replacements should go through the coordinators. VTA and Clipper cannot verify your SmartPass eligibility thus would not be able to issue a replacement.

Q: Why is my Eco Pass (SmartPass) not working on Express Bus?

Starting January 1, 2018, access to the Express Bus service is limited to the Express SmartPass. Your institution may have opted to renew for the Standard SmartPass. Please reach out to your SmartPass coordinator to confirm. To use your Standard SmartPass on Express Bus, you need to load E-cash value and pay a \$2.25 surcharge upon boarding.

Q: Do I get an additional \$0.50 E-cash transfer discount from BART when using my Standard SmartPass?

No. Starting January 1, 2018 the Standard SmartPass provides a \$2.25 “discount” on Express Bus, therefore you will only need to pay a \$2.25 surcharge upon boarding instead of a full fare of \$4.50.

Q: I am a student of a college participating in SmartPass. It was communicated to us that my Express Bus ride from Fremont and Gilroy will not be affected by the fare change. What are my options?

Starting January 1, 2018 VTA will allow Collegiate SmartPass card holders continued access on the Fremont Express (routes 120, 140, 180 and 181) & Gilroy Express (route 168) until revenue services begin at the BART Milpitas and Berryessa stations. Students that used their Eco Pass (SmartPass) Clipper cards on these routes in 2017 will automatically be loaded with Express SmartPass temporarily. Additionally, on these routes only, Bus operators may also accept a valid student photo identification card from the following SmartPass participating colleges as valid fare for boarding: San Jose State University, Foothill College, De Anza College, Evergreen College, San Jose City College and Mission College. Students are advised to reach out to their college coordinators if they have any questions.