

Traffic and Parking Standing Committee Zoom Meeting Monday, February 7, 2022 – 1:00 p.m.

Attended:

Samuel Patterson, Hal Robinson, Jane Mahan, David Whitcomb, John Lobur, Richard Bradley, Dean Hansen, John Furla, and Paul Cafferra; and Cassidy Savage, non-committee member, transcribing minutes

Discussion:

- **Agenda**

Sam welcomed those in attendance and went over the agenda which was continued discussions about current parking proposal options for 22-23 with License plates as permits, Commuter Zone idea changes, Front Vanity License Plate ideas, and why parking rate changes are under discussion.

- **Parking Proposal Options 22-23 – Review**

Sam opened the discussion with License Plates as Permit adoption. He explained that this would entail someone's license plate serving as their parking permit after being registered in our parking software. This would mean no more hangtags for Faculty/Staff or Commuter students, as well as other options, such as Pavilion Garage. For Faculty and Staff, it may mean you have multiple vehicles listed under your permit; one vehicle would be allowed to park on campus at a time.

We would still only allow students to register 1 vehicle at a time but would allow Faculty/Staff members to register as many as needed. The same restrictions would apply. The system would still only display the type of permit an individual is eligible to purchase based on classification. Residential students would continue to purchase physical permits. We will slowly move into this. The benefits include increased speed and convenience with managing and purchasing permits, not having to make a trip to the Parking office, ty to register multiple vehicles and/or rental cars.

John Lobur added that this will reduce fraud because hangtags can more easily be improperly used.

- **Commuter Zones – Changes and Permits**

Hal Robinson explained the map in detail. He stated that the map contained color-coded rings that represented distance on campus from academic buildings. The proposal for Commuter lot changes is based on these distances. Ex: 1000 would be labeled a specific type of Commuter lot, and then space beyond that would be marked a different kind of a Commuter lot. Commuter A would be one price with certain lots and Commuter B would be a separate set of lots at a lower price.

Sam explained that the goal is to think differently in terms of “Park-N-Ride,” changing the lot names, but still providing transit for students along with more parking lot options. Commuter B would provide lower price permits with more flexibility and options to go back and forth from the SOC, JAC, and other designated campus parking permit locations.

Richard Bradley supported this idea stating that we want to increase utilization in lots with rebranding and price differentiation. He stated this could also lead to reduced traffic and cruising around the center of campus.

Jack Furla stated that he thinks it would be worth it to try the rebranding and that he foresees the student body having a positive reaction.

Paula Cafferra mentioned the name of these newly rebranded lots and why a more descriptive name for the lots could be beneficial. Rather than Commuter A and Commuter B, other ideas are Economy Commuter and Enhanced Commuter. Paul stated that people could intellectually understand what the lots are and what they mean a little better.

John Lobur stated that a 10–15-minute walk anywhere from parking is a luxury, especially when compared to bigger urban schools. John also mentioned the benefit of incentivizing OUT buses and biking. Sam explained parking “buy backs,” which some municipalities and Universities use that pay people to bike or rideshare when not renewing a permit, and that these ideas could be discussed as well in the future.

Dean Hansen confirmed that the Commuter lot changes would not affect Faculty/Staff lot designations and stated that he was in favor of the proposed lot changes.

Jane Mahan agreed that the plan seems helpful in leading to utilization of other Commuter lots on campus.

David Whitcomb stated he liked fairness in both increasing and decreasing two different options.

Paul mentioned the idea of parking sensors for spaces to show which lots are available or are full. Sam stated there were still obstacles in providing this, such as cost and the look/aesthetic of the University, but allowed that the idea is still on the table. Richard explained some different options of how these sensors could be used to accomplish this but agreed that cost is the main factor now for why these have not been implemented.

Hal discussed the chart provided in the PPT. He stated the chart represents average walking speed relative to distance and allowed that is what was used to decipher how many minutes it would take to get from parking lots to certain buildings.

Jack stated that it would help if we were to explain and market the map and additional explanations to students for before and when they purchase parking permits.

- **Front Vanity License Plates**

Sam showed the committee examples of vanity license plates that we would make available for those to purchase that still want to go back into parking spaces. Dean mentioned one concern regarding vehicles that do not have the equipment needed to mount a front license plate. Jane mentioned another concern regarding those that already display some type of different vanity plate of some kind on the front of their vehicles.

David pointed out that other universities have adopted this technology and encountered these issues, so we could find out what others have done as a result.

Richard explained that we wanted to make these options as affordable as possible.

- **Why parking rate Increases are necessary**

Necessary garage maintenance costs – WGI's report from the 2019 Pavilion Parking Garage and the South Oxford Center parking garage have extensive five-year construction cost estimates that need to be addressed. These include \$419,740 in necessary maintenance projects, 208,475 for 2021, 182,075 for 2022 (All delayed due to the pandemic) for the South Oxford Center Parking Garage, and \$57,000 for 2021 for the Pavilion Garage.

Parking garage bond payments and future parking garage planning- Currently 33% of our budget is the bond payments for the Residential Garage. Future Garage planning across from Music/Baseball.

Increased base level wages and service-based orientation - Chancellor's Salary & Wage Increase, Department Reorg, along with change of philosophy and mindset, more warnings, discussions, and empathy towards individual situations and circumstances.

Technology Costs – EV (Electric Vehicle) charging stations, license plate recognition, better analytics, and reports.

Oxford University Transit costs will increase in 2022 - We discussed financial and operational impacts due to the pandemic focusing on the financial and operational impact to the Department of Parking and Transportation including parking meters, welcome center and visitor parking operations that were not maintained, and open parking from March 18, 2020, to July 1, 2020. Student parking permit refunds totaled \$986,399, which thankfully was reimbursed by CARES Act funding.

Oxford University Transit (OUT) federal transit subsidies and CARE, fortunately, saved the Department approximately \$900,000 along with an intentional effort by limiting expenses and deferring capital maintenance projects also assisted with budget concerns. The OUT budget for 22 was recently approved by the Board of Alderman with the University Share being \$1,582,549.62 (25% of our budget).

Dean Hansen asked if we oversell permits in certain areas as we discussed why rate changes are necessary. Sam explained why Commuter permits are oversold. He stated that turnover throughout the day is 2-3 times for each space on campus in commuter lots. The challenging part is the complaints around the perception that there are enough parking spaces on campus or "running out of spaces," however, many outlining lots continue to have spaces available throughout the day. It's our biggest challenge from a marketing standpoint to convince students to not always focus on the convenient and close-in lots and drive in circles waiting for a space to open instead of learning of the available lots that are a bit farther out but may take less time overall with one's commute.

Paul mentioned the topic about lower-paid employees at the University not having to pay for parking to come to work. Richard spoke on the idea of creating more tiers, such as those making under \$30k paying an even smaller percentage than half. John Lobur supported this idea and stated further that a more detailed sliding scale would make sense.