

University Transportation Committee December 11, 2007

Present:

Scott Rutherford, CEE and chair of committee
Joshua Kavanagh, Transportation Services
Laura Davenport, SEIU 925 Representative
Vicky Peltzer, UWPD
Matt Weatherford, Center for Studies in Demography & Ecology
Jeanette Henderson, Real Estate
Luther Martin, Union Representative – WFSE
Peter Dewey, Facilities Services
Celeste Gilman, Commuter Services

Absent:

Danny Kraus, Human Resources – Labor Relations
Stephanie Parkins, GPSS Representative
Paul Brown, HFS
Jean Garber, Dentistry
Hannah Lomers-Johnson, ASUW Representative
Helen Shawcroft, Medical Center Administration
John Stevens, ASUW Representative
Scott Baebler, ICA
Pamela Jordan, Family & Child Nursing
John Schaufelberger, Construction Management

Meeting convened at 8:00AM at UWPD's conference room.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Kavanagh deferred the approval of minutes until the next meeting, as the minutes had been sent to the committee too late for everyone to review them. Mr. Kavanagh announced that Celeste Gilman, the new Transportation Systems Manager, will be the new UTC staff person, to provide greater future continuity.

Meeting Time

There was general discussion about what time the UTC meetings should start. It was agreed that the next meeting would start at 8:30AM.

Proposed UTC Charge

Mr. Kavanagh stated that he is working on the charging statement for the UTC, which will go to V'ella Warren. He wants to see the UTC be the representative voice for the campus on transportation issues. Parking has been consolidated under the UTC and the U-PASS

program has always been under the UTC. In the future, intra and inter campus mobility for all modes will be remanded to the UTC. Mr. Kavanagh asked the committee how UTC has interacted with other entities on campus. There is a question whether the UTC will be an advisor to the Faculty Senate, ASUW, and other groups, not just the Administration. Other groups would be able to send transportation issues to the UTC.

Chief Peltzer requested an example. Mr. Kavanagh brought up the green parking proposal from Faculty Council on University Facilities and Services (FCUFS) and whether consideration of that idea belonged with FCUFS or the UTC.

Chief Peltzer brought up the point that the UTC has representatives from many groups on campus, but that student representative positions were often hard to fill. Chief Peltzer and Mr. Kavanagh discussed the observations that the current UTC student representative has been very reliable but student participation varies from year to year. Often issues need to be taken to ASUW to get student input. Mr. Kavanagh noted that the objective would not be to keep issues from being aired at student bodies, but to consolidate faculty and staff deliberation of transportation issues. The UTC is already a very representative body. Hopefully one outcome of the rechartering will be to make it even more representative.

Ms. Davenport noted that she is appointed by her union. She is charged with communicating with her union and she expects her union to communicate any transportation issues they have concerns about to her. She felt that having committee members act as effective liaisons to the groups they represent would be improved by having appropriate training for committee staff.

Mr. Kavanagh noted that the Professional Staff Organization (PSO) is one group that is not represented on the UTC. Mr. Dewey added that while the UTC has not had any PSO representatives, a number of the committee members are professional staff.

Ms. Henderson supported the direction the rechartering was headed. She thought the UTC would be seen as more robust. Good communication with other groups and a perception that the UTC is representative would decrease other groups' feelings that they need to put out a competing view on transportation issues.

Mr. Kavanagh stated that John Schaufelberger has been informally filling the role of liaison with the Faculty Senate Committee on Facilities and Services (which he heads). Mr. Kavanagh would like to formalize this.

Chief Peltzer suggested clearly defining expectations for new members. Mr. Kavanagh said that will be addressed in the new charging statement.

Mr. Kavanagh will circulate a draft charging statement for comment. The goal is to get the charging statement to Charles Kennedy and V'ella Warren before the January UTC meeting.

Mr. Martin will have an email address by the end of the week.

Seatbelts on Shuttles

Mr. Kavanagh explained that the issue of seatbelts on shuttles had been raised in the Faculty Senate. This issue is in UTC's scope. Becky Bullock from Risk Management will be available at the next UTC meeting. Hopefully, the faculty members who raised the issue will be able to attend as well.

Mr. Kavanagh noted that there is presently no statutory requirement for seatbelts on any of the buses that the UW owns or contracts. In the present seating configuration, seatbelts would be considered unsafe in some seats (e.g., side facing seats). However, that does not address forward facing seats. It may be appropriate to have belts for forward facing seats. Mr. Kavanagh corrected the second bullet of item number two in part B of the handout on the topic (Information Item Regarding Seatbelts in UW Shuttle Vehicles, February 12, 2007). While the bullet states "standing passengers would probably not be allowed, given seatbelt regulations," the statutes read that belted seats must be used first and then standing is permitted if no seats are available.

Mr. Rutherford asked who had raised the issue. Mr. Kavanagh responded that one of the people is Eric Stern at Harborview. The issue has been predominately raised by passengers of the Health Sciences Express (which travels on I-5 for part of its route). Many of these people have a heightened sensitivity from dealing with trauma injuries professionally. It is not clear who all the people advocating for seatbelts are.

Chief Peltzer suggested trying to use a size of vehicle that would accommodate the passenger demand but would not have seats side by side all the way back. Two options in the future would be to get smaller vehicles or put seatbelts only on front facing seats. Mr. Weatherford noted that his understanding was that people would be required to use a seatbelt if a seat with a seatbelt was available. Mr. Kavanagh confirmed this and noted that drivers would be liable for a \$100 citation if people were not using the seatbelts. This is an operational and policy issue.

Ms. Henderson asked which of the two handouts on the issue was newer. Mr. Kavanagh responded that he thought they were from approximately the same time. They were from the last time the issue came up at Faculty Senate. Ms. Henderson questioned whether the issue needed a fresh look. She asked what the law requires and what does science show. If the law does not require seatbelts on shuttles, science does not show that they are necessary, and there have only been a few complaints in eight years, then it seems clear not to install seatbelts.

Parking and U-PASS Rates

Mr. Kavanagh presented the proposed rates to FCUFS. Over the last 5 years, parking rates have increased 5.5% per year. In the 2007-2008 fiscal year, there was no increase because the Director of Transportation Services position was vacant even though the UW was experiencing significant cost increases. In 2008-2009 there will need to be a process of catch up. Cost drivers include the following:

- A blended average for 2007-2009 of 7.5% in increased labor costs;
- Infrastructure costs including \$7.5 million for UW Tower parking, West Campus Garage (costs effected by labor market and concrete and steel cost increases – these cost increases have been issues on both major and minor projects);
- King County Metro’s transit fare increase (an increase of \$0.25, 17% of the fare) – as a result the UW’s cost per ride will increase by 17%;
- A higher number of transit rides (following rising gas prices);
- The City of Seattle parking tax (applies to the vast majority of parking including the parking dollars that subsidize transit – hoping to get some relief on this), which is 5% this year and an additional 2.5% each year for the next two years;
- Sales tax increase of 0.2%;
- Department restructuring (long term savings, short term costs).

Further challenges include the difficulty of tracking current transit participation trends. Also, there will be a period during which the UW Tower garage will be very poorly utilized before the new occupants move in.

Mr. Rutherford commented that he had not heard previously about the UW Tower situation. Mr. Dewey said there is an issue regarding how much of the cost of the Tower is allocated to parking and how much revenue can be obtained from parking. Over the next six months this will not be a determining factor, but over the long term it will be, especially considering the significant deferred maintenance. Transportation Services has an estimate of these cost dynamics, but will not know for sure until 10 years from now.

Ms. Henderson commented that it is better to buy an existing building than to build new. Mr. Kavanagh stated Transportation Services has no qualms about buying the building. The cost analysis that was done was based on the best available research. Ms. Henderson noted that this is a short term issue. In the future, there will be demand for that building and that area. Shuttles might be considered at some point.

Mr. Rutherford asked more questions about the allocation of costs. He wanted to know about the earthquake soundness of the garage. Mr. Kavanagh responded that while it is not the building we would build today, he would not say it was unsafe. Mr. Dewey noted that the price of the garage has been established, but the cost of the deferred maintenance has not. Mr. Kavanagh clarified that they are characterizing the cost as \$7.5 million “as improved”, and not quibbling about the cost of deferred maintenance.

Mr Kavanagh stated a 10% increase in parking fees is proposed for next year (which is 2.3% net of taxes), and a 12% increase in transit passes (which have increased at an average of 5.8% per year in previous years).”

Mr. Rutherford noted that only half the capacity of E1 is used and questioned whether the proposed increase would result in raising fees and loosing revenue. Mr. Kavanagh said that bridge has already been crossed. It is hard to know whether that is because of parking rates or the price of gas. Transportation Services is reaching the point where its budget model is unsustainable. Mr. Dewey noted that about \$4.2 million from parking fees subsidized U-PASS last year. That amount will be up this year, to around \$6 million. Ms. Henderson stated

the price of gas is likely to continue to go up and this will impact the demand for parking. Carbon cap and trade systems proposed by U.S. presidential candidates and Mark Emmert's endorsement of a climate neutral UW campus all fit with that trend. The City of Seattle's recent parking tax was also discussed. Mr. Dewey noted that if the City had wanted to use the parking tax to discourage driving they would have applied it to providers of free parking as well.

Ms. Henderson stated that we want parking demand to go down. Mr. Dewey noted that the only issue with that goal at the moment is that the self sustaining model is threatened. Mr. Kavanagh said that Transportation Services budgets for the funding model it has, but will be looking to the UTC for advice and support for potential other strategies for funding the U-PASS program. Mr. Rutherford brought up the disabled shuttle, which is paid for with parking fines, but possibly should be funded from another source, which would free up the parking fine revenue. Chief Peltzer suggested charging for use of the Health Sciences Express. Mr. Dewey added that the Health Sciences Express could be made part of the U-PASS program, so riders would be required to have a U-PASS or pay.

Green Parking

Mr. Kavanagh presented a proposal that had been made to support and encourage low impact vehicles. The proposal was to designate premium spaces in every lot for green vehicles. The qualifying vehicles could be identified by EPA standards and their carbon footprints. Spaces would be available on a first come first served basis, with overflow to regular parking. However, as proposed, Mr. Kavanagh stated he would have difficulty endorsing the proposed solution, though he embraces the idea. The problem with premium spots is they suggest that everyone is going to the same place (which is not necessarily the case) or premium spots would have to be put all over the lot to serve different destinations. Doing this would create greater fragmentation and customization, at a time when Transportation Services has been charged with decreasing these. Alternatively, green vehicle use could be rewarded by providing benefits for electric vehicles. There is already a population using electric vehicles on campus, and they are clambering for charging capacity on campus. Providing this service may be more appropriate. Another proposed solution would be to create a "green car club" – rather than reward them with parking, reward them with other things that would be of value to them (cheaper oil changes, free car washes, etc.). Transportation Services has had good luck using incentives in transit. There are other possible solutions.

Mr. Dewey questioned what vehicles would qualify as low impact. Mr. Kavanagh responded that a standard would be set – possibly based on vehicle carbon footprint per mile based on standards from the EPA (focused on fuel economy), tail pipe emissions, etc. He added that rewarding green vehicles is a noble cause, but a big administrative burden. It may go beyond the University's scope.

Ms. Henderson asked whether Transportation Services has had to restripe to allow for bigger vehicles. Mr. Dewey responded that they have not, but they have ceased making small stalls. Ms. Henderson noted that vehicle size is a revenue issue. With smaller vehicles, it is possible to fit more vehicles into a lot. If people make personal choices to have larger vehicles, they

should pay. Chief Peltzer stated that people who park over the line are ticketed, although this is hard to enforce since it is not always clear who was the first over the line in a row of cars.

Mr. Kavanagh added that the University uses the smallest stall possible that can fit the greatest number of cars possible. In other words, stalls that fit the majority of the vehicles that come to campus on any given day. Unless there is a critical mass that fit in small stalls, then there is a revenue loss if too many small stalls are provided. Mr. Dewey said the standard stall size is 9 feet by 20 feet.

Mr. Henderson suggested charging more for large vehicles.

Ms. Davenport said that we already live in a city that has emissions standards. Presumably if you are driving around you have met the standards.

Mr. Kavanagh stated that the thrust of the idea is to take resources that are within the system as a whole to reward people who exhibit a behavior that is in the higher good. Mr. Weatherford responded that he did not see a person driving alone to campus in a green vehicle as a higher good. Mr. Kavanagh noted that was a good point and that rewarding green vehicle use misses the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) goals of reducing infrastructure costs, congestion, etc.

Chief Peltzer said she was interested in knowing more about the impact of the new metered parking that the City added. It is her observation that more students are parking on the street. It is cheaper for them and an easier system to use. Mr. Dewey responded that the City would not know who is using the stalls, but they ought to be able to say how use has changed. City parking at \$1.50 per hour is half the cost of on campus parking. About a third of students park on the street.

University Area Transportation Strategy

Mr. Kavanagh stated that SDOT will be releasing a new version of the University Area Transportation Strategy (UATS) next week. UTC's comments are being incorporated. Mr. Kavanagh asked whether there was interest in SDOT presenting the Strategy to the UTC in a joint meeting with South Campus. There was general support for this suggestion. Mr. Kavanagh will follow up.

Sound Transit

Mr. Dewey talked about the Rainier Vista Study and the pedestrian bridge from the Sound Transit station. Sound Transit is required to provide a grade separated pedestrian crossing. Their proposal is a bridge with stairs (and an elevator) on the east side of Montlake and a ramp at the Burke Gilman Trail. The Rainier Vista Study proposed bridge would extend the grade separation over the Burke Gilman Trail. The Rainier Vista Study option was more attractive to the people at the Landscape Committee. However, there is an issue of timing. Sound Transit wants to get their design completed and approved. The UW has alternative

bridge idea, which is less defined and more expensive. The challenge is to not delay timing but get the right solution.

Mr. Rutherford asked whether there is any indication that Sound Transit will be short of money with the failure of Proposition 1. Mr. Dewey responded that the failure of Proposition 1 is not a particular issue for this project, but Sound Transit is still short on money. They have an interest in getting the station built, but they may not have the money to pay for everything. Other funding sources should be explored. UATS could be one potential source.

Electric Bicycles

Mr. Kavanagh said that the first electric bicycle location has been selected: UW Tower (near the corner of 45th and Brooklyn). The other sites have not been determined. Somewhere in the Medical Center/Health Sciences area and the Red Square area are two strong candidates. Mr. Kavanagh asked for suggestions from the UTC and noted that there will be additional public process. Ms. Davenport suggested having a station near the IMA. Mr. Kavanagh concurred that there would be interest in using the bicycles to get to the IMA, but was not certain whether there would be enough demand for trips originating at the IMA to warrant a kiosk.

Chief Peltzer raised the issue of security. Bicycle theft is the biggest issue on campus. Mr. Kavanagh responded that the system will have built in tamper detection and it will be possible to track and recover the bikes. There is also interest in having cameras at the installations. There is a meeting coming up to discuss cameras. Mr. Kavanagh added that the UW will not own or operate the electric bicycle system.

Mr. Kavanagh provided information on the project funding. A State grant has been awarded with \$100,000 in seed funding (which can be spent immediately on infrastructure expenses) and an additional \$100,000 that will be awarded based on performance (how many vehicle commute trips are eliminated as a result of the system).

Non-Traditional Vehicles

Mr. Kavanagh raised the issue of neighborhood electric vehicles in the university fleet. There are questions about vehicles such as golf carts and where they can legally and safely operate. This issue was brought to Mr. Kavanagh's attention early in the fall. No one has been able to identify an existing policy that covers this issue. As the scope of the UTC has been re-envisioned, it seems appropriate for the UTC to draft a policy.

Mr. Dewey asked for clarification. Mr. Kavanagh responded that the question of neighborhood electric vehicles only accelerates the need to address the larger issue of non-traditional vehicles. Chief Peltzer added that vehicle operators have been taking vehicles that are not street legal onto streets. There are also issues around transporting passengers in non-traditional vehicles. Mr. Kavanagh raised another issue: vehicles that fit between bollards and can go into pedestrian zones. Chief Peltzer noted that the issues of non-traditional vehicles impact other campuses as well. It is also an issue that cities have sought to address. Mr.

Dewey brought up segways. Mr. Kavanagh said that the issue was raised regarding four wheeled vehicles, but there should also be a look at motorized segways, scooters, electric bikes, etc.

Passenger-Only Ferries

Mr. Kavanagh stated that Ms. Gilman has in depth knowledge on the project, as she was the prime consultant's project manager for King County on the most recent study effort. He said there was tremendous political momentum for implementing a ferry route from UW to Kirkland, but logistically the service is at least a year away. Ms. Gilman provided a brief background on the project, including logistical issues regarding the docking options at UW and the travel time implications for the route. The dock options east of the Montlake cut would not be suitable for use without significant capital investments, but docking west of the Montlake cut adversely impacts travel time and increases the conflicts with other water users.

Ms. Henderson noted that the UW agreed to support a pilot ferry route from the UW marina to South Lake Union using small electric vessels this past fall. However, the service got off to a late start and by the time it was in operation the marina renovation was underway.

Adjournment

Next meeting will be January 8, 2008 at the UWPD.