

## **University Transportation Committee Minutes December 18, 2003**

In attendance:

Ken Anderson, School of Public Health and Community Medicine  
Jeannette Henderson, Real Estate Office  
Professor Scott Rutherford (Chair), Civil and Environmental Engineering  
Jeraldine McCray, Facilities Services  
Diana Perey, Transportation Services  
Paul Roybal, Transportation Office  
Peter Dewey, Transportation Services  
John Schaufelberger, Construction Management  
Helen Shawcroft, Medical Center Administration  
Carl Root, Parking Services  
Matt Weatherford, Arts and Sciences  
Kathryn Wilham, PhD Program in Social Welfare  
Ken Winstead, Intercollegiate Athletics  
Vicky Peltzer, UW Police  
Paul Brown, Housing and Food Services

Absent:

Matt Bonorden, ASUW  
Kerry Kahl, Purchasing and Stores  
GPSS Representative  
Daniel Kraus, Personnel Services  
Ali Tarhouni, Finance and Business Economics

### **Action Items**

- In the future, handouts for the next meeting will be sent out with the agenda, even if the handouts were used in a previous meeting.
- Mr. Root will report at the January meeting on the progress towards finding a way for Parking Services to accurately keep track of who is eligible for payroll deduction.
- Mr. Root will report at the January meeting on the results of the windshield survey, which is being done to determine the difference between the number of parking violations and citations.
- Mr. Dewey will bring to the January meeting the numbers from the biennial survey estimating how many trips are taken on transit by SOV and Motorcycle permit holders using their free UPASSes.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Anderson moved to approve the minutes from the December 1, 2003 meeting. Mr. Rutherford seconded. Motion carried.

## **Approval Process Schedule**

Mr. Dewey introduced the proposed timeline for setting new parking and U-PASS fees, attachment 1. The UTC will meet two to three more times to decide on the fee proposal. Mr. Winstead brought up that fees for football parking should be included in proposal and Mr. Dewey agreed. Mr. Dewey added that all fees, including football parking fees, will be discussed at the meeting on January 14, 2004.

## **Proposed Guidelines for Transportation Fee Changes 2004-2006**

Mr. Dewey began the discussion of attachment 2.

### *Pricing Relationship between Modes:*

Mr. Dewey described the pricing relationship set between the different modes to the University. Modes that the University most wants to encourage are charged the least, and modes that the University wants to discourage are charged the most. Preference is based on improving the management of demand and minimizing the long term operating costs of the transportation system.

### *Pricing Relationship between Products:*

1. Daytime SOV parking permit fees will increase faster than U-PASS fees.

Ms. Peltzer opined that fee increases are particularly burdensome for employees in departments with 24-hour operations. She commented that alternatives to driving alone are less plentiful for those who work swing shift and evenings. Ms. McCray and Mr. Root discussed the different parking pricing for employees who park swing shift, evenings and night times. These products are discounted compared to daytime permits. Mr. Dewey noted that the increases described on attachment 2 apply to daytime permits only. Mr. Dewey explained that in the future it may be possible to go further than the four employee parking pricing schemes and charge people based on what time of day they are parked, but currently this is not feasible because of the technological limits of a visually inspected hangtag.

2. Employee U-PASS fees will increase slower than student U-PASS fees.

Discussion was initiated by Mr. Schaufelberger on the fairness and political viability of increasing student U-PASS fees at a faster rate than employee U-PASS fees. Mr. Dewey explained that the proposed difference was an 11% increase for students and a 9% increase for employees. Mr. Schaufelberger suggested that student and employee U-PASS fees be raised at the same rate.

Concerns were also raised about the willingness of employees to pay a higher rate, given that next year classified staff are not expected to get raises, yet again. Mr. Rutherford was concerned that fees were not increased last year because of these reasons, but the increase cannot be put off indefinitely.

Ms. Shawcroft raised the issue that starting in 2005 many more University employees will be unionized. Will transportation fees be a subject of negotiation? The likelihood of this happening was discussed. Ms. Peltzer felt that increasing the fees would more likely cause the fees to be an

issue of negotiation. Mr. Dewey suggested that treating all employees the same may make transportation pricing less of a labor negotiating point. Ms. Wilham added that making the reasons for the fee increase clear to people would make it easier for them to accept. There was a general feeling that the implications of employee unionization should be considered further.

3. Carpool parking fees will continue to be tied to the UPASS, but an additional fee per carpool vehicles will be charged.

Mr. Dewey reviewed the discussion on this topic from the last meeting. There was general acceptance of charging a per-carpool monthly fee to permit carpools in addition to the U-PASS fee paid by each carpool member. One proposed fee is \$15, but the exact price will be set in the context of all the transportation fees.

4. Occasional parking fees (Individual Commuter Tickets and Pay Per Use Parking) will increase at the same rate as daytime SOV parking permit fees.

Mr. Dewey explained that SOV parking permits are sold pre tax, whereas Individual Commuter Tickets, E-1 daily parking, and Pay Per Use Parking are all post tax. Therefore, SOV permits are actually discounted in correspondence with the tax rate. The implications of this were discussed. There was general agreement that the tax affects should be taken into account in setting fees. Also, that the relative discount available with the Husky Card for people parking in E-1 should be maintained or increased.

Mr. Rutherford suggested that people might be willing to pay more for Individual Commuter Tickets if the tickets could be mailed out and paid for through payroll deduction, rather than requiring people to pick the tickets up. Mr. Root brought up that Parking Services currently does not have a way to accurately track who is eligible for payroll deduction. He will report on the progress towards fixing this problem at the January UTC meeting.

5. E1 cash fees will increase faster than E1 debit card fees. E1 debit card fees will increase slower than daytime SOV parking permit fees.

Mr. Dewey explained that E-1 is an underutilized resource while at the same time other parking areas are overutilized, and that parking fees should encourage fuller use of E-1. Ms. Wilham initiated a discussion of the possibility of a shuttle from E-1. Mr. Dewey said that a shuttle from E-1 is unlikely to be effective because of cost, timeliness issues due to traffic and street configuration, and the concern that money spent on a shuttle would be money spent on making driving more attractive rather than less attractive. Nevertheless, the Transportation Office will do a more thorough analysis of shuttles.

6. Daytime gatehouse fees will increase faster than daytime SOV parking permit fees.

Mr. Dewey explained that of the people who pay the \$8 daily parking rate most are visitors, though about a third are students. The high fees enable the University to get more money from transient users of the system rather than relying exclusively on employees and student commuters. Ms. Shawcroft noted that Medical Center patients also have to pay this rate and that is considered a burden. Therefore, the Medical Center validates parking to stay competitive with other hospitals. Increases in the visitor parking fees will require the Medical Center to pay more.

7. Evening gatehouse fees will increase slower than daytime gatehouse fees.

Mr. Dewey mentioned that the rationale for this is that there is less demand for parking in the evening.

8. Departmental Commuter Tickets will increase at the same rate as daytime gatehouse fees.

Mr. Dewey explained that this pricing relationship has been in place for 15 years.

There was a discussion about parking enforcement. Mr. Dewey said that the amount of money spent on enforcement has increased substantially, but revenue has not increased at the rate expected given the investment. Mr. Rutherford pointed out that better enforcement changes people's behavior. Ms. Perey, Mr. Dewey, and Mr. Root described current efforts to determine whether there are more parking violations than citations. Mr. Root will bring the results of this study to the January meeting.

Mr. Winstead brought up concerns about difficulties in finding parking. There was a brief discussion on this and some suggested that it was a result of too many daily permits being sold and a result of parking violators.

#### *Other Pricing Considerations*

Mr. Dewey explained that the other pricing considerations listed were motivated by increasing the ease of operations.

### **Review of Financial Projections**

Mr. Dewey handed out a four-page document outlining the three-year financial projections, attachment 3.

Mr. Dewey explained that the proposed increase in SOV permit fees of 12% a year was chosen because it was thought to be enough to cover the costs of the system, but given the various assumptions contained therein it may not be.

As part of a general review of the capital expenditures, Mr. Dewey and Ms. Perey described the capital expenditures for the Research Technology Building in detail. Only half of the projected parking need will be filled at the building-only the spaces that have been lost with the removal of the surface lot will be replaced. Under the current arrangement, the envelope that will house the parking will be paid for as part of the building cost, but constructing the floors and ramps of the parking garage will be paid for by Parking Services. Mr. Dewey mentioned the assumption that the projects would all be financed with debt at 90% of the project costs. This percentage of financing is higher than how precious projects have been financed. The West Campus and Triangle garages were both financed with less than 60% of project costs.

There was discussion of the likely increases in transit costs. While paying for transit service is cheaper to the University than building parking structures, it is still a substantial cost. The financial projections are based on the assumptions that transit ridership will grow by 3% a year and that in 2005 Metro's fares will increase by 20%, a \$3 million increase. It is also assumed in the model that the number of people parking on campus will remain nearly constant. Mr. Rutherford brought up the point that the financial projections do not take into account the need to add more buses. If ridership increases enough, this will become an issue. Metro does not have the resources to buy more buses, so the University will likely have to pay for them. What will remove the need to buy additional buses is if the light rail line is constructed and riders shift to it – relieving the congestion on the buses. Ms. McCray added that the parking cap is set by the conditions of approval of the campus master plan because it is thought that the street grid can't handle more traffic, so additional person trips to campus will need to be made without additional vehicle trips.

Mr. Dewey pointed out, in the operating fund balance section of the handout, that the assumptions that the projections were based on are not sustainable. The operating fund balance becomes negative

in 2007-2008. In addition, there are possible capital projects that are not included in the projections, such as the Business School. In short, the assumptions made in the financial projections do not work.

Ms. McCray brought up the need to assess the return on the investment being made in parking enforcement.

Mr. Weatherford asked if larger fee increases should be considered. In response there was discussion about alternative ways of structuring fees. Mr. Rutherford suggested that new buildings pay for their own parking structures. Concerns were raised that the operators of those buildings would then get the parking revenue. Ms. Henderson mentioned this could be addressed by having the building operators hire Parking Services to manage their parking. Presenting another option, Mr. Anderson noted that since Community Transit charges the University more for their service, the University should charge U-PASS users more to use Community Transit. There was general agreement that it was worth exploring having different U-PASSes at different costs that provide access to different services. Mr. Dewey suggested that one way to do this would be to have UPASSes cover trips up to a certain dollar amount, instead of being good for unlimited trips.

Mr. Anderson suggested that the current structure of UPASS benefits encourages people to live far away from campus. The vanpool subsidy was discussed. Mr. Dewey clarified that for a person commuting from Snohomish County; if they use a vanpool subsidy it costs the University \$2 a day, whereas if they take Community Transit it costs the University \$5 a day.

There was discussion about whether or not parking enforcement is revenue neutral. Parking enforcement brings in slightly more revenue than it costs. Mr. Rutherford noted that improved enforcement ought to lead to improved parking fee revenue, as people choose to pay for parking rather than risk a citation.

Mr. Dewey explained how transit costs are determined. Prices are set annually and paid quarterly. The number of trips that the University must pay for is estimated using a model from a survey of faculty, staff, and students. The price per trip is based on negotiation and the transit agency's standard fares. What the University pays only covers part of the cost of operating transit service to the UW. The rest of the cost is met by taxes.

Ms. Henderson introduced the idea of investing in a housing stimulation plan in the vicinity of the University, to increase the number of faculty, staff, and students within walking and biking distance of campus. There was interest in looking into this idea, but concern that the cost/benefit ratio would not be as good as current strategies such as subsidizing transit.

### **Proposed Elimination of Free UPASSes with SOV and Motorcycle Permits**

Given the feedback at the last UTC meeting and subsequent discussions with Metro about the value of the proposal, Mr. Dewey suggested not eliminating the free UPASSes until the smartcard system is in use. Mr. Schaufelberger and Mr. Dewey discussed setting a marginal fee for UPASSes given with SOV and Motorcycle permits. The fee could be based on how often SOV permit holders and Motorcycle permit holders tend to use the UPASS for transit, either from the prospective of how much it would be worth to them, or how much it costs the University for those trips. To help inform the pricing of a UPASS for SOV permit holders, Mr. Dewey will bring the estimate of how many transit trips are taken by SOV and Motorcycle permit holders to the next meeting.

### **Proposed Changes in Carpool Parking Program**

Mr. Dewey summarized the discussion from last meeting, concluding that it was felt that a small amount should be charged for carpool permits. The charge would be a monthly charge, by permit, and it would be substantially less than the cost of splitting an SOV permit. The current suggestion is that the permit would cost \$15 the first year, \$18 the second year, and \$21 the third year. This is in addition to the cost of the UPASS paid by each carpool member. Charging a fee for carpool permits will reduce the number of carpool permits issued. The question is how it will affect the number of people actually carpooling together. The hope is that it will discourage people who currently pretend to be a carpool, but really drive alone.

There was insufficient time to discuss Sound Transit or Other.

### **Attachments:**

Attachment 1 Proposed Guidelines for Transportation Fee Changes 2004-2006

Attachment 2 Proposed Guidelines for Transportation Fee Changes 2004-2006

Attachment 3 Parking and UPASS Financial Projections dated 12/15/03