

**University Transportation Committee**  
**January 31, 2005**

Present: Peter Dewey, Transportation Services  
Jeremy Fichter, GPSS  
Jeanette Henderson, Real Estate Office  
Kerry Kahl, Purchasing and Stores  
Jerri McCray, Facilities Services  
Diana Perey, Transportation Services  
Carl Root, Parking Services  
Paul Roybal, Transportation Office  
Scott Rutherford, CEE  
Helen Shawcroft, UW Medical Center  
Vicky Stormo, UWPD  
Kathryn Wilham, Social Work

Absent: Ken Anderson, School of Public Health  
Paul Brown, HFS  
Danny Kraus, HR – Labor Relations  
Chip Lydum, ICA  
John Schaufelberger, Construction Management  
Matt Weatherford, Arts and Sciences  
Ali Tarhouni, Finance and Business Economics  
Mae Diligencia, ASUW Rep

Guests: Bob Johnson, Parking Services  
Elena Fox, Transportation Office  
Jan Fahey, Transportation Office  
Sherry Ochsner, Housing

**Introductions**

Introductions were made around the table.

**Update of Carpool Changes**

Carl Root gave a report on the impact of the July 1, 2004 parking fee changes as they relate to carpools. He distributed handouts that reflected carpool totals from 2002 – 2004 with the percentage of decrease in carpool permits issued from the Parking Services office, the gatehouses, E1, and PPUP. Mr. Root discussed the permit priority change of 3-person carpools. He also referenced a graph which outlined the changes in mode splits

during the same time period, based on the data just received from the biannual transportation survey.

Mr. Dewey noted that while every category of carpool permit issuance dropped dramatically, the carpool mode share dropped much less. This may indicate that fraud was a factor in carpooling when permits were free. So while gatehouse carpool permits declined 55%, the mode share declined only about 9% (a decline from 11% mode share to 10% = 1% divided by 11% = 9% decline). The good news is that the statistics also indicate that drive alone ridership did not increase. A logical conclusion is that more commuters may now be using transit, as transit mode share increased from 36% in 2002 to 38% in 2004.

Mr. Root confirmed that overall the transition of the new parking fee schedule and the new carpool requirements was surprisingly smooth and Parking Services received far fewer complaints than feared.

Mr. Dewey stated that the results of the biennial survey had just been received and that there would be a thorough presentation about all the results at the next UTC meeting.

### **Future U-PASS with Smart Card**

Mr. Dewey then began a discussion about Smart Card. He gave a brief overview of its history, how the transit agencies started talking of it about 7 – 8 years ago, why the transit agencies felt the need for it, and outlined the difference between our current U-PASS “flash pass,” unlimited right to ride system, and the new Smart Card with its associated advanced technology. Over the next few years, the UW will transition to Smart Card. The University has decided to replace the current ID card system with a photo Smart Card, which will continue to allow employees and students to carry one card for both identification purposes and transit access. Since the UW ID cards and the U-PASS are inextricably tied, approximately 75,000 ID cards will have to be replaced with Smart Cards. The cost and procedural steps to accomplish this will be substantial. By

winter of 2007, all buses will be equipped with Smart Card technology. It has not yet been determined when the transit agencies will stop honoring “the flash pass” (U-PASS). Mr. Kahl asked if the transit agencies are going to help pay for Smart Cards. Mr. Dewey said that our current contract with King County and Sound Transit includes the provision of smart cards.

Mr. Dewey explained that changing from the flash pass to the Smart Card enables, in fact forces, us to look the benefit package associated with the U PASS. For example, the U-PASS is currently an “unlimited right to ride” transit pass and a discount mechanism for receiving carpool and occasional use parking privileges. We must confirm the transit benefits of the U PASS and transmit that information to the transit agencies. We also must develop the processes for issuing smart cards, collecting fees, etc.

Mr. Dewey discussed a paper e-mailed earlier to the committee entitled “Transit Benefit Options – Issues and Concerns.” This paper outlines a set of options that have been conceptually developed in conjunction with the transit agencies. It identified issues for a transit options which were divided into two groups: U-PASS options, which are “right to ride” fare media intended for frequent users, and products for new or occasional users. Additionally, various combinations of the options that could be offered were described.

Mr. Dewey reminded the committee that last winter, when they were discussing fees, there seemed to be a consensus that there was inequity in the current one-fee system. For example, those who seldom use transit pay the same fee as those who commute by bus from Marysville every day, which has an estimated value of \$150. Smart Card technology will allow for capturing information that was previously not available to us, like counting the number of trips, routes, miles, etc. This opens a set of options for pricing that have heretofore been unavailable. However, these options are not without problems. For example, some on the committee commented that using some of the information available might be intruding on privacy rights.

At this point Ms. McCray queried about what the objective of this conversation was. Mr. Dewey indicated that it is important to discuss and identify the goals we are trying to achieve in changing the U-PASS benefit package, and in particular the transit benefits. He stated that instituting a system that would allow us to recover more costs from those who cost more, as described in the “Maximum Transit Benefit Value” option, would not be pretty and may seem intrusive. So we need to weight the benefits of higher cost recovery with the burden of developing and implementing a system such as that described in the “maximum transit benefit value” option.

There was a general discussion about pros and cons of different ways to charge more for transit service and some of the issues and complications that could result. Ms. Wilhelm stated that she thought high cost users would be willing to pay a premium for more expensive service. Ms. Stormo said that she thought that rather than the maximum transit benefit value option system described in the paper, something using the e-purse might be better. Mr. Dewey said that other options for achieving the same objectives were being explored.

Ms. Shawcroft asked what the reason for charging more for high users is, to keep the program solvent, or is it the equity issue. She suggested that the next meeting should address the objectives, not just the solutions.

Mr. Dewey noted that there are other benefits associated with U-PASS – discounted carpool and commuter ticket rates, reimbursed rides home, Night Ride, and merchant discounts to name a few. These tie-ins would need to be explored. Ms. Fox said that the package of benefits allows even those who are low users of transit to feel like they are getting value out of the U-PASS.

All agreed that this matter needed further discussion.

### **West Campus Garage Expansion**

Ms. Perey gave an update on the West Campus Garage expansion. The project has been identified in the Campus Master plan as a mixed use facility. The project will provide parking for people working in the southwest campus and office space for Transportation Services. She went on to say that the schematic design process has been completed. There was some difficulty in meeting the budget because steel prices have risen substantially and the inflation factor had to be adjusted upward so some program requirement may be compromised. The project will go to the Architectural Commission for Design approval in March as well as the Board of Regents for both design and budget approval. Construction is projected to begin in April 2006 with completion a year later. Funding for the project and other capital projects comes from tax exempt bonds issued in September 2004. The bonds will be paid off with receipts from the sale of parking permits over the next 30 years.

### **Light Rail at the Stadium Station**

Mr. Dewey gave an update on the Light Rail project. Stations are planned for the Stadium, Brooklyn, Roosevelt and Northgate. The Stadium station would include a tunnel under Montlake Blvd., connecting it to the NE corner of the Triangle. Some of the initial concerns about that proposition are that 60 – 70% of the commuters would be let off at Stadium site and exit through the tunnel, possibly creating unsafe crossing and traffic delay on Pacific Place. The University had advocated for an extension of the tunnel under Pacific Place as a way to address these issues. Additionally, Metro is planning to provide better bus service to the area, but this will require additional space for bus parking. Mr. Dewey reported that the project is expecting to obtain a cost estimate this summer and then they will need to get funding for it. Presently they have funding for light rail from downtown to the airport.

Sound Transit wants six acres in E10, 11 and 12 for construction laydown. This is under discussion and negotiation. Sound Transit will be holding an Open House this Thursday, February 3, at 4242 Roosevelt.