

MEMORANDUM

TO: Rich Van Den Hul, Vice President, Business and Financial Affairs

FROM: April Markiewicz, Associate Director/Toxicologist II, Chair, Parking and Transportation Advisory Committee, PSO Representative

DATE: May 19, 2014

SUBJECT: 2013-14 PTAC Recommendations

The 2013-14 Parking and Transportation Advisory Committee has met frequently throughout the academic year, continuing the work initiated by the 2012-13 PTAC on addressing its remaining charges:

1. Parking Fees

- a. Fee setting process
- b. How rates/fines compare to other universities with similar parking systems
- d. Financing plan and rates to implement a parking capital plan

2. Policy Review

- a. Current approach for space and permit allocation and review of approaches used at other universities similar to Western. Include review of how the approach serves the University's Mission and Goals.
- b. Determine and recommend means of enhancing campus "way-finding" assistance.
- c. Process to allow the Director of Public Safety to respond to emergent needs while being transparent.

As it reviewed its charges over the academic year, the PTAC did so in keeping with its Guiding Principles (page 9) that:

- *Each parking space has a value that is based on location and time of day, week, month, and year. No parking space has a value of zero (Parking and Transportation Advisory Committee 2012-13).*
- *To fulfill its mission and responsibilities, Parking Services must have a sustainable source of revenue to meet its financial obligations, and provide sufficient reserve funds to properly maintain lots, replace equipment and supplies, and support future identified access needs.*

The PTAC focused its efforts on the Policy Review charge first as it awaited updated financial information regarding Parking Services operational and maintenance costs, as well as recommendations from the Parking and Transportation Capital Implementation Advisory Committee. A summary of its recommendations, based on consensus follows, however some members may choose to submit a separate minority opinion regarding these recommendations.

2a1. Review of Current Approach for Space Allocation

(a) Parking Lot Utilization Rates

Parking occupancy rates in all on-campus parking lots are monitored each year during the first week of November by an outside consulting firm, TranspoGroup, Kirkland, WA. The Lincoln Creek Transportation Center is not included in this study. This time period was identified by Western as one of the busiest weeks in the school year in which utilization rates in the lots are at their highest. This study is conducted as part of the agreement between the university and the city of Bellingham in which the university will maintain at least 3400 parking spaces on its property to reduce parking impacts on the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Parking occupancy rates were calculated for all parking lots and individual parking lot types and is defined as the percentage of the parking supply that is observed to be occupied during a given time period.

Based on our review of the “G” lot data in the 2013 Parking Utilization Study by TranspoGroup, the weekday average utilization rates (Table A6) for all of the lots were below 90% from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. In comparison to historical utilization rates, there has been a slow, but steady decline over the last several years as more employees utilize alternative forms of transportation to and from campus.

These data indicate that there is sufficient supply to accommodate demand, however recognizing that supply is limited in those areas of campus where demand for parking is highest.

PTAC Recommendation #1:

That future lot utilization studies should include the Lincoln Creek Transportation Center (LCTC). Additional information should also be collected with regard to whom is using the LCTC and for what purpose(s).

(b) Zonal Parking Space Allocation

All parking lots on campus have been categorized and grouped into zones based on demand and parking type. Some of these zones are designated by color on the Parking Map, however Parking Services uses a system of letter coding and numbers on permits to specify lot assignment based on parking type. The main types are as follows:

1. **Residential (“R”):** On campus parking adjacent to student residence halls
2. **Restricted (“G”):** Faculty/Staff parking in the highest demand areas: East College Way behind Old Main, Miller Hall, and Ross Engineering Technology, as well as on West College Way around the Health Center and the PAC.

3. **Faculty/Staff (“G”)**: On campus parking in high demand areas: north of Old Main, south of College Hall, south of Parks Hall, east of Arntzen Hall, Environmental Studies, and the Communications Facility.
4. **Faculty/Staff (“G”)**: Off campus parking in lowest demand areas: the Archives Building, 32nd Street, and the Physical Plant.
5. **Faculty/Staff (“A”)** Campus periphery parking in low demand areas: south of the AIC and west of Fairhaven College.
6. **Student, Commuter, and Residential (“C”)**: Campus periphery parking in low demand area: south of West College Way.

The color-coding for each of these types of lots on the map are: red, green, blue, blue, blue, and yellow, respectively. The fact that three different types of lots designated with the letter “G” are color-coded “blue” and the fourth by “green” does not make sense as a way to differentiate lot types. Moreover, the use of an apparently random number with the letter designation to indicate the exact location of a lot adds another layer of confusion to employees, students, and guests.

Due to the specificity of the letter/number combination on the permit issued to the employee, it is assumed that if one’s parking lot is at capacity on arrival to work, the employee cannot temporarily park in any other lot without contacting Parking Services staff and getting permission. This can lead to a number of phone calls being made to Parking Services each day, interfering with its ability to conduct business in support of the university’s mission to facilitate bringing people together and serving as a model for institutional effectiveness, innovation, and sustainability.

Permit Pricing:

The price of permits for the different types of lots are similar as well, so that employees pay the same price for a permit whether they park in a Restricted lot, an on campus high demand lot, on the campus periphery, or off campus. This lack of a significant price differential between lot types undermines efforts to reduce demand on the core campus lots and increase utilization in the less used lots. It also financially punishes the employees who work off campus, but must pay on campus prices to park in a low demand off campus lot.

PTAC Recommendation 2A – 2C:

A. Transition to fully color-coded zone parking system

To simplify the existing color-coded zone parking system it recommends removing the letter and number designations and using an updated color-coding system to clearly differentiate each of the lot types from each other. Additional color-coded zones may need to be added to provide the same level of access to employees currently parking in their assigned lots. Demand, lot utilization rates, and location should therefore be considered as each lot is categorized into a color-coded zone.

B. Evaluate requests, monitor lot utilizations, and mitigate any excess demand.

Once the color-coded parking zone system is implemented, Parking Services should evaluate parking zone requests in relation to parking space capacity and lot utilization

rates in the requested zone. If necessary, it should limit the sale of permits or implement other measures to ensure a higher probability of the employee finding a parking space in a lot in her/his assigned zone. Although some degree of searching for a parking spot will still take place if the preferred lot is full, it will only occur within a geographically defined zone.

This system includes a “park down” feature, which means that an employee with a high demand zone parking permit may park in any lower demand zone lot as needed.

The implementation of an updated color-coded zone parking system should be Fall Quarter of 2015.

C. Parking Services will provide periodic updates to the PTAC regarding the updated color-coded zone parking system after its implementation.

PTAC Recommendation 3:

If parking permit rates are increased in the future, phase in zone pricing for permits in the updated color-coded zone parking system to reflect demand, location, and market rates at the same time that the updated color-coded zone parking system is implemented.

The advantages of zone parking are:

1. Zone parking is less expensive and more efficient
2. Increases flexibility for permit holders to find a parking space on campus.
3. When coupled with zone pricing, reduced parking rates in lower demand lots creates an incentive for people to park in less utilized lots and frees up high demand lots for more people willing to pay the higher rate. It also provides more spaces for visitors and guests to campus. (Caveat: low demand lots should provide the permit holder the same level of accessibility, safety, and mobility.)
4. Color-coding is understandable to most people and easier to enforce.
5. Lot utilization on campus averages 70-80% during peak times, except in the restricted lots which averages in the high 80 to low 90% range and can accommodate increased movement of vehicles that may result.
6. Increases efficiencies by eliminating the need for the permit holder to call Parking Services informing them s/he is not parking in her/his assigned lot. Moreover, Parking Services staff would no longer receive numerous calls during the day freeing up their time.
7. Efficiencies can result in cost savings in terms of less signage, as well as less staffing for monitoring and enforcement.

The disadvantages are:

1. Initial costs to update lot signage on campus, though long-term management of a zone parking system is less expensive to administer and enforce, potentially offsetting the initial implementation costs.
2. It may generate more driving within campus as permit holders seek out an “optimal” parking space for their needs, though most employees are already parking in their preferred lot within their assigned zone based on their seniority.
3. This may also increase utilization rates in some high demand lots causing some permit holders to be displaced to lower demand lots when they have paid a higher rate to park in a high demand lot, creating the perception of inequity. Closely monitoring lot utilization rates after implementation and possibly limiting permit sales may help to quickly address or prevent this from occurring. The option of creating an additional type of zone to manage access better in the core lots could also be explored.
4. It may generate more driving within campus as permit holders use their cars to run errands rather than walk.

(c) Review of approaches used at other universities similar to Western

Zonal parking system and pricing are used at the University of Washington, Washington State University, and Oregon State University. Each has their own system of designating zones that helps them to manage their parking.

2a2. Review of Current Approach for Lot Assignment

Currently, when an employee applies for a parking permit s/he includes their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices for a lot assignment on the application form. The application is reviewed by Parking Services and every effort is made to accommodate the employee in getting her/his 1st choice lot assignment. Current practice is to use the employee’s years of service (seniority) at Western as the determining factor in lot assignment. This approach is used due to the limited number of parking spaces in the central core of campus where demand far exceeds capacity. Employees applying for a permit in these high demand lots may therefore not have their first choice accommodated until they have earned enough seniority to obtain a parking space in that lot.

The employee has the option to apply for a Personal Reserved Space in the lot of her/his choice and pay the premium rate. Alternatively, s/he can accept a lot assignment in a less preferred lot and her/his name put on the Waiting List maintained by Parking Services for the preferred lot assignment in the event that an opening occurs.

Students applying for a parking permit are assigned a lot based on number of credits earned, providing upper-class senior and junior level students precedence over under-class students, similar to the seniority approach used for employees.

PTAC Recommendations 4A-4C:

A. Continue to use seniority as the primary criterion by which a lot assignment is made.

There was very little discussion about changing the current approach. It is perceived by most, if not all PTAC members, as the most fair and equitable procedure of making a lot assignment, especially in the central campus core parking lots that are in high demand. The understanding by the PTAC is that all employees can eventually accumulate enough seniority to get a parking assignment in their preferred location on campus.

B. Continue to use the date/time when a parking permit application is submittal as a tiebreaker when lot assignment conflicts arise.

The PTAC further supports Parking Services' current methods to resolve conflicts in situations where two employees with equal seniority apply for a lot assignment and only one space is available. Parking Services uses the date and time the application was submitted as the "tiebreaker" with the first to apply getting the accommodation.

C. Continue to provide exemptions to seniority-based lot assignments for:

(1) Personal Reserved Space Parking

Any employee can apply for and obtain a Reserved Space assignment in her/his preferred parking lot on campus using the **Personal Reserved Space or Additional Access Application** form. The employee pays the full price of the Reserved Space parking permit.

(2) Additional Access Parking (All Lots Assignment)

This option is an accommodation available to eligible administrators in addition to a regular parking permit. It is specifically for the purpose of conducting university business, including unloading and loading, and allows the user to park in most campus lots for up to 2 hours. The administrator completes the **Personal Reserved Space or Additional Access Application** form and must receive approval by the Director of Public Safety.

(3) Unique Exemptions

A few employees in specifically identified positions that must conduct on and off campus errands in the performance of her/his job duties using her/his personal vehicle can also apply for an exemption. The justification is that efficiencies in conducting university business in support of its mission and goals supersedes restricting lot assignment based on seniority. To date, only two employees have received this accommodation, a newly hired Dean and the Associate Vice President for University Relations. In both cases, the unions and Human Resources were informed of the exemption.

The topic of access to parking based on position or title was briefly discussed, however the unions expressed strong concerns about making this option available beyond its current application.

D. Comparison to Peer Institutions:

The approach used by the peer institutions we evaluated, e.g., the University of Washington, Washington State University, Oregon State University, also base lot assignments on demand, but use permit pricing as a means to relocate single occupancy vehicles from high to lower demand lots further from the campus core. A cursory online search revealed that some universities use seniority like Western, or use a combination of seniority and pricing. According to John Shaheen, Assistant Director of UW's Transportation Services, that we consulted specifically on permit an lot assignment prioritization, he said, "*Each campus has its own culture. There is no standard or best practice for this that I know of.*"

Additional Comments and Recommendations

5. The PTAC reaffirmed that Parking Services must be a self-supported, sustainable auxiliary and operational and capital deficits must be addressed as the first priority.
 - a. This is in keeping with the PTAC's Guiding Principles (attached) that "*...a successful and sustainable transportation management program requires sustainable source of revenue to meet its financial obligations, and provide sufficient reserve funds to properly maintain lots, replace equipment and supplies, and support future identified access needs.*"
6. Stormwater runoff issues from the south gravel lots, as well as from aging paved lots at the north end of campus must be addressed as a top priority and funded through long-term bonding and payments from Parking Services revenues.
 - a. The costs of installing stormwater runoff treatment and mitigation measures will be paid for by the university, not from Parking Services revenues.
- 7A. The PTAC reaffirmed its support to charge a parking fee to park at the Lincoln Creek Transportation Center. This is in keeping with the PTAC's Guiding Principles that "*...each parking space has a value based on its location and time of day, week, month, and year*", in addition to maintaining, repairing, replacing, administrating, and enforcing it. "*No parking space has a value of zero.*"
- 7B. It recommends that as the fee is implemented that the Parking Services, WTA, and the city of Bellingham work together it monitoring and addressing any potential changes in parking behaviors that may adversely impact current levels of on-street parking in the surrounding neighborhoods.
8. The PTAC recommends that when the south gravel lots are paved or the Lincoln Creek Transportation Center property is renovated, the university should cover expenses equal to the \$1.46 million dollars that Parking Services has paid in the past out of its revenues towards the Lincoln Creek debt service. This would serve as a means of reimbursing Parking Services, as well as the permit holders who helped pay for it through their permit fees over the last several years.

9. To thoroughly evaluate the operational and capital revenues needs of Parking Services and make recommendations regarding permit rate increases, the PTAC must be provided detailed information regarding the true operational and capital improvement costs of the university's parking and transportation system. Specifically it needs to know the following:
 - a. **Operational Costs:** total operational costs that include annual lot maintenance expenses as they relate to the lifespan of each lot, including patching and sealing.
 - b. **Renewal Costs:** cost per year revenue stream needed to have money to replace a lot when it reaches the limit of its lifespan. Investment of revenue funds in interest-bearing account to add additional funds over time and address inflation.
 - c. **Cost to put Asset Back in New Condition,** i.e., address all backlogged maintenance, repair, and replacement needs.

The PTAC has been informed that this information will be available by Fall Quarter this year and looks forward to continuing its work on addressing charge 1. Parking Fees, and completing its evaluation of way-finding assistance and facilitating communication with the campus community.

Enclosures: PTAC Guiding Principles
Summary of Costs Savings to Parking Services to Date

PTAC Guiding Principles

The following fee rate recommendations are made within the framework of the Guiding Principles outlined below. The committee is aware that its recommendations, if implemented, will have financial impacts institutionally, on employees, and on guests parking on campus. These recommendations, however, have been made within a broader perspective of ensuring that Parking Services is managed responsibly to meet its financial and operational obligations to both itself and the University. Underlying the committee's Guiding Principles is the University's strategic plan that we "serve as a model for institutional effectiveness...and sustainability" while maintaining the value of being "responsible stewards of resources". The committee, by consensus, believes that Parking Services should be empowered to become a well-managed, self-sustaining entity that meets a broader University objective. These recommendations are first steps in attaining that goal.

Parking Services is a "self-sustaining" entity that manages Western's Sustainable Transportation Program, including access and parking. Parking is only one of the multiple transportation options used to access campus however, due to the physical constraints of Western's urban location, parking availability is a limited resource. *As such, each parking space has a value that is based on location and time of day, week, month, and year. No parking space has a value of zero (Parking and Transportation Advisory Committee 2012-13).*

To fulfill its mission and responsibilities, Parking Services must have a sustainable source of revenue to meet its financial obligations, and provide sufficient reserve funds to properly maintain lots, replace equipment and supplies, and support future identified access needs.

Current rates, fees, and practices do not address the true operating costs of maintaining adequate services. These rates and fees have been re-evaluated with input from the Finance subcommittee. Moreover, a regular revenue stream is necessary to maintain, repair, and perform reasonable improvements to current parking lots.

Summary of Costs Savings to Parking Services to Date

1. Changes that have been implemented by the university in response to the PTAC’s February 20, 2013 recommendations are as follows:

a. The following recurring expenditures have been removed from Parking Services budget starting 2013-14 and assumed by the university are:

Employee Bus Pass Subsidy	\$68,762
Sustainable Transportation Program	\$50,648
Public Safety Support Functions (staffing)	\$143,431
Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) program w/ COB	\$23,965
<u>Lincoln Creek Bond Payments</u>	<u>\$200,000</u>
Total expense savings	\$486,806

b. The PTAC’s proposed increases for some of the parking fines were reviewed by classified staff unions (WFSE and PSE), and the faculty union (UFWW) earlier this spring and all have officially stated that they do not consider parking fines a mandatory subject of bargaining. As such, Parking Services has proceeded in implementing those increases. The exact amount of increased revenue to Parking Services from this source has yet to be determined. Actual revenues from fines in 2013 were \$267,194. The fee rate increases are as follows:

FEE TITLE/ DESCRIPTION	CURRENT FEE RATE	PROPOSED FEE RATE	CHANGE AMOUNT	% CHANGE
Improper Display of Permit	\$10.00	\$15.00	\$5.00	50%
No Valid Permit	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$5.00	20%
Overtime at a Meter	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$5.00	20%
Overtime Use OB/UB/VV/AI*	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$5.00	20%
Overtime at a Load Zone	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$5.00	20%
Unauthorized Transfer of Permit	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$5.00	20%
Motorcycle w/o Permit	\$5.00	\$10.00	\$5.00	100%

* OB = Official Business, UB = University Business, VV = Vendor, AI = All Lots

Future rate increases on fines will reflect a 2 - 3% inflation rate each year, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

c. Vice President Rich Van Den Hul provided an update on April 16, 2014 to the chair on a few of the recommendations from last year’s PTAC that were “in progress”. The updates were as follows:

i. Evening Permits: the student After Hours parking permit will be discontinued as of Fall 2015. Parking in C-lots after-hours will still be free and lots closer to the core of campus have pay boxes that can be used. Employee After Hour permits

were not included in the 2013-13 PTAC recommendations due to union negotiations and short time frame. Including employee After Hour permits should be considered by PTAC in the future.

ii. Lincoln Creek Transportation Center: Parking permits will be issued at a cost of \$25/quarter starting Fall Quarter of 2016.

iii. Event Parking Permits: the university will pay the parking expenses for prospective students/families visiting Western. Enrollment and Student Services was covering this cost at \$4.00/day per permit. The 2012-13 PTAC had recommended increasing this rate to \$5/day for 2013-15 biennium and at the full rate starting July 1, 2015 and thereafter.

d. The status of the remaining recommendations are “In Progress” and are currently being addressed by Vice President Van Den Hul. The 2012-13 PTAC recommendations for implementation in 2014-15 to generate additional revenue to Parking Services were as follows:

Commuter Pack Permits (Scratch Permits) increase to \$5/day		\$8,000
Discontinue permits to retired employees at no charge (½ current rate)		\$5,000
Dept. Reserved Spaces and Unv. Service Vehicles:	(1 st bien.)	\$5,000
Increase to \$150 + tax (2014-15), \$200 + tax (2015-17)	(2 nd bien.)	\$10,000
Increase WWU Foundation Spaces (current rate \$3.33) to \$5		\$1,500
Increase Reserve Lot fee to ½ day rate		\$5,000
Increase Contractor/Construction Parking Space to ½ day rate		\$5,000
<u>Charge \$25/yr for University Business (UB) Permit</u>		<u>\$2,500</u>
Total additional revenue estimated to be generated		\$41,000

The proposed rate increase of the Commuter Pack Permit will need to go to the classified staff unions (WFSE and PSE) and the faculty union (UFWW) as a bargainable issue.