

April 29, 2004

To: Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis
Vice President and Chancellor

From: Clint Oster, Chair
Parking Study Committee

Re: Parking Study Committee Report and Recommendations

In the summer of 2003, Chancellor Brehm convened a campus-wide committee to recommend ways to improve the predictability of parking on the Bloomington campus. The committee met throughout the fall and winter of 2003-4 and considered a wide range of possible recommendations.

The members of the committee were: Fred Cate, Patricia Foster, Danielle Harris, Diana Hawkins, Bob Jacobs, Lou Malcomb, Dennis McGreer, Ted Miller, Clint Oster (chair), Randy Pardue, Kevin Robling, John Robbins, Paul Sullivan, Steve Surrent, Tom Swafford, and Mia Williams. Doug Porter and Miriam Whitlow served as ex-officio members.

The Parking Study Committee Report and Recommendations are attached.

Report of the Parking Study Committee

April 29, 2004

In 1992, a university-wide task force on parking opened its report to Chancellor Gros Louis with the following statement:

“From all quarters, the task force heard of growing frustrations over problems related to parking and transportation at the university. ... By general consensus, campus parking and transportation services are inadequate, adjacent streets are clogged with overflow traffic, and confidence is flagging that long-term solutions to the myriad problems can be found.”

The 1992 task force made a wide-ranging series of recommendations and many of those recommendations have been implemented in the past decade. Indiana University has done a great deal to improve the transportation and parking situation since 1992. However, growth in the number of students, staff, and faculty coupled with the construction of new buildings and facilities may well have outpaced the transportation and parking improvements so that the situation today can be described in much the same terms as in 1992. On some parts of the campus, the limitations on available parking are so severe that the situation is beginning to impinge on the ability of faculty and staff to do their jobs.

In the summer of 2003, Chancellor Brehm convened a campus-wide committee to recommend ways to improve the predictability of parking on the Bloomington campus.¹ The committee met throughout the fall and winter of 2003-4 and considered a wide range of possible recommendations. While the committee believes there are many worthwhile steps the University could take, the committee has focused on five recommendations listed below and discussed in the remainder of this report.

Recommendation #1: Implement the second phase of the Universal Transportation Fee so that all buses are “free” to all students.

Recommendation #2: Restrict the sale of A and C permits to faculty and staff only.

Recommendation #3: Restrict the Atwater, Jordan, and Poplars parking garages into A permit spaces only.

Recommendation #4: Restrict R spaces for service and delivery vehicles only.

Recommendation #5: Construct a new parking garage to help alleviate the parking shortage on the south and west portions of the campus.

¹ The members of the committee were: Fred Cate, Patricia Foster, Danielle Harris, Diana Hawkins, Bob Jacobs, Lou Malcomb, Dennis McGreer, Ted Miller, Clint Oster (chair), Randy Pardue, Kevin Robling, John Robbins, Paul Sullivan, Steve Surrect, Tom Swafford, and Mia Williams. Doug Porter and Miriam Whitlow served as ex-officio members and Shannon Finnegan provided research assistance.

Discussion

Recommendation #1: Implement the second phase of the Universal Transportation Fee so that all buses are “free” to students

The committee believes that a critical component of any effort to improve transportation and parking on the Bloomington campus is a significant increase in the use of the bus system. The implementation of a Universal Transportation Fee was planned for two phases. The first phase, which has been implemented, integrated campus transportation with Bloomington Transit. The intent was to attract off-campus students to the bus system and reduce the number of student cars coming to the campus each day. The Universal Transportation Fee to implement the first phase was \$30 per semester. The second phase is to incorporate the IU bus system into the Universal Transportation Fee so that any full-time student could ride any IU bus without charge (beyond the Universal Transportation Fee). The cost to implement the second phase would be an additional \$15 per semester, bringing the total Universal Transportation Fee to \$45 per semester.

We believe that this recommendation is warranted no matter what other steps to improve transportation and parking are or are not taken. There is considerable unused parking capacity in the vicinity of the stadium that would be more useful and more utilized if this recommendation were adopted. This recommendation is particularly critical if all of our recommendations are adopted because two recommendations will have the effect of reducing available parking for students near the center of campus. Broader availability and use of the campus bus system could help mitigate the impacts of these other recommended restrictions.

The recommendation to increase student fees is not made lightly. The committee recognizes the potential impact any increase in fees can have on some students' abilities to finance their education. In the case of the Universal Transportation Fee, however, we believe the increase is justified and will provide clear benefits to students. It's critical to realize that for students already using the campus bus system, this recommendation will result in their fees being lowered rather than raised. Under this recommendation, students who are currently purchasing a campus bus pass for \$158 per year will no longer have to buy that pass. Instead, they will only pay an additional \$30 per year (\$15 per semester) for the second phase of the Universal Transportation fee and receive the same services. Thus, students who currently purchase a campus bus pass will see a savings of \$128 per year under this proposal. Occasional riders who don't purchase a campus bus pass and instead pay the per ride fee of \$.75 will also save money if they currently ride more than 20 times per semester, the equivalent of only 10 round trips or less than one round trip per week. It is only those students who don't currently use the campus bus system whose fees will go up. Even among these students, many will likely find cost savings as they substitute using the bus for operating their cars.

This recommendation could be even more effective if several other changes were also made to the campus bus system. For example, Woodlawn Avenue is currently blocked by railroad tracks. Were Woodlawn Avenue to be completed over the railroad tracks, buses could be routed more efficiently, making bus service from the stadium parking lots to the campus quicker and more convenient. Similarly, bus service from the stadium could be improved if additional parking areas at the stadium were paved and the buses picked up students at multiple stops throughout the stadium parking area. Finally, the committee believes that serious consideration be given to lowering the cost to students of parking in the park-and-ride lots at the stadium.

As a companion recommendation, the committee also recommends that the campus bus web site be redesigned to be more useful to first-time riders. While the current web site may seem sensible to those already thoroughly familiar with the campus bus system, that is not the most important audience. Instead the web site should be reoriented to those who have not used the system before and would like to do so.

Recommendation #2: Restrict the sale of A and C permits to faculty and staff only.

Perhaps the greatest source of frustration for those seeking parking on or near the campus is the inability of A and C permit holders to find vacant A and C permit parking spaces. It's hardly surprising that this is a frequent occurrence, because there are currently an average of 2.6 A permits sold for each A space and an average of 1.7 C permits sold for each C space. While selling more permits than spaces is the norm on other Big Ten campuses, the committee was unable to find any other campuses that oversell faculty and staff parking spaces to the extent done on the Bloomington campus. Overselling by between 10 percent and 20 percent, as is done at the University of Iowa, seems to be much more the norm.

The only ways to reduce this degree of overselling permits is either to create more parking spaces for A and C permit holders or reduce the number of A and C permits sold or both. Currently, some categories of students are allowed to buy A permits and other categories of students are allowed to buy C permits. The number of students in these categories is large. Currently, 743 students have purchased A permits. To put this number in perspective, the largest parking garage on campus has only 660 spaces. Currently, 1047 students have purchased C permits. To put this number in perspective, the combined number of students with A or C permits could completely fill the Atwater, Jordan, and Poplars parking garages.

The committee believes that the only short-run relief from this situation is to restrict the sale of A and C permits to faculty and staff only. By restricting A permits to faculty and staff, the ratio of A permits to A parking spaces would drop from 2.6 to 2.3 and the ratio of C permits to C spaces would drop from 1.7 to 1.3. While this recommendation would not eliminate the parking problem for faculty and staff, it would result in a noticeable and immediate improvement.

To be sure, most of the students who are eligible to purchase A or C permits perform a valuable service to the university as Associate Instructors and Graduate Assistants. However, the burden they place on the limited parking availability is clearly hindering the ability of many faculty and staff to do their jobs.

Recommendation #3: Restrict the Atwater, Jordan, and Poplars parking garages into A permit spaces only.

Currently, an A permit holder can park in any of the four parking garages on campus without paying an hourly fee. In each of these four garages, it is also possible for any other person to park during the day by simply paying an hourly fee. The committee recommends that the three most congested garages, Atwater, Jordan, and Poplars, be restricted to A permit parking only between the hours of 7:00 am and 6:00 pm. These garages are frequently completely full at peak times during the day. At this time, the garage at 11th and Fee lane does not fill up during the day, so there is no need to impose this restriction on this facility. If, at some future point, the garage at 11th and Fee Lane routinely fills to capacity, a similar restriction should be considered for that garage as well.

Restricting these three garages to A permit parking only will help alleviate the shortage of A parking spaces in the core of the campus. The committee was unable to determine what proportion of the spaces in these garages is usually filled by A permit holders and what proportion is filled by those paying the hourly fee, primarily students. Anecdotal evidence suggests that both the Atwater and Jordan garages are often used by students during the day. The Poplars garage appears to be used primarily by A permit holders with relatively few people paying the hourly fee. Thus this recommendation would not likely change the situation in Poplars very much, but it would provide additional A permit parking in the Atwater and Jordan garages. As with recommendation #2, this recommendation would not eliminate the parking problem for faculty and staff, but it would result in a noticeable and immediate improvement.

One possible concern with this recommendation is the impact on parking availability for visitors to the campus. We have two responses to this concern. The first is that for visitors whose visit to the campus is scheduled in advance, it is simple to provide them in advance with a one-day A permit that will allow them to park in these garages or in any other A lot. This is the routine practice for many campus visitors already. For those visitors whose visit is scheduled on shorter notice, it may be possible to have a one-day pass held for them by the attendant at the entrance to the parking garage. This is a practice that is followed at several other universities. The second response to this concern is that with the current level of congestion in these three garages, it is not clear that they provide any effective parking for visitors anyway.

Recommendation #4: Restrict R spaces for service and delivery vehicles only

Service and delivery vehicles have a clear need to be able to find immediate short-term parking in close proximity to campus facilities. In the committee's view, this is the

appropriate function of the R spaces. However, R spaces are also used for parking by various university administrators. Restricting R spaces for service and delivery vehicles might allow some of those spaces to be converted to A permit spaces. Realistically, however, the gain in the number of A spaces would be small and would be largely matched by the number of former R permit holders now restricted to A permits.

Thus, this recommendation is mostly symbolic. The symbolism may still be important. A frequently heard concern is that the administrators who are in the best position to implement solutions to the parking problems on campus have opted out of these parking problems through the use of R permits. Some people are concerned that the ability to opt out of the parking problems has reduced the incentive of these administrators to confront these problems. Whether or not this perception is true, it remains a widely held perception and one that could be easily eliminated by this recommendation.

Recommendation #5: Construct a new parking garage to help alleviate the parking shortage on the south and west portions of the campus.

While many areas of the campus experience parking shortages from time to time, the southwest portion of the campus, particularly in the vicinity of the Law School appears to have the most persistent and severe parking problems. The previous four recommendations will provide some relief to this portion of campus, but the committee believes that even with these steps, problems will remain in this area. Therefore, the committee endorses the proposed construction of a parking garage near this part of the campus.