

Transportation and Parking Committee Meeting: September 29, 2021 via Zoom

Agenda:

Introductions, charge, 2021 recommendations
P&T issues and general discussion
Future meeting schedule and content discussion

In attendance:

Jess Wenger, Committee Chair, Environmental Projects Manager, Facilities Management
Scott Barker, Faculty, School of Engineering
Carey Drayton, Office of Emergency Preparedness
Mark Stanis, Facilities Management
Becca White, Parking & Transportation
Stuart Foster, Information Technology Services
Emily Bagdasarian, School of Commerce
Bill Palmer, Office of the Architect

Committee Charge, Members, & Meeting Notes:

<https://parking.virginia.edu/transportation-and-parking-committee-notes-and-membership>

2021 Recommendations:

Committee recommendations to Executive Vice President for Operations submitted in June 2021.

P&T Issues and General Discussion:

P&T service schedule - <https://parking.virginia.edu/service-schedule>

General Observations as of September 1, 2021:

- Students returned on August 18.
- Transportation and parking needs, demands, and patterns are still emerging.
- Academic annual reserved permit holders - 75% of pre-COVID annual permit holders have purchased annual permits. This is up from 59% in May 2021. The demand is probably a reflection of hybrid work models.
- Health System annual reserved permit holders - 100% of pre-COVID demand for annual permits and transportation returned.
- Annual low-cost permit holders - 58% of pre-COVID annual permit holders have purchased annual permits. This is up from 51% in May 2021. Some of the drop in this type of demand has been picked up in new parking options for hourly, daily, and multi-day sales. People buying permits as needed saves them money and helps reduce parking demand on grounds.
- Student residential permits – Trending to 100% of pre-COVID levels which is approximately 25% of the number of beds.
- Hourly/Daily/Multi-Day parking access – Demand for this type of access is spread across 30+ locations. The most popular locations are Blue and EIG Commuter and Culbreth Road Garage. When there was capacity, E3 on Whitehead Road was popular, but capacity is limited there now for transient access.

University Transit Service (UTS) and Safe Ride Fall 2021 :

- Federal public transit mask mandates apply to UTS. COVID-related federal restrictions have been extended through January 2022, impacting UTS boarding capacity and therefore the weekday route alignment on Whitehead Road. Passenger mask compliance is excellent. Public transit mask requirements will remain until Jan 2022 regardless of other UVA mask policy changes.
- Bus driver shortages has reduced UTS frequency. Retention bonus, sign-on bonus, and student wage increase were implemented in August 2021. Given the incentives, UTS is optimistic about adding staff and therefore improving frequency (estimated January 2022). However, the driver shortage is universal, impacting public schools and other area transit providers and training requirements will delay impact on frequency until January 2022 at the earliest.
- UTS Feedback this fall has been focused on lack of weekday service on McCormick Road, frequency weekdays before 6PM, and frequency on weekends.
- Safe Ride demand has shifted to Thursday through Saturday nights, flipping a pre-COVID multi-year trend of peak demand of Sunday through Wednesday nights. Staffing is being shifted to mitigate demand, however, 50-75 ride request are coming in per hour from Midnight to 2AM during the weekends. Probably due to wait times, over half of the rides are cancelled or no-shows, further compromising the ability to meet demand. We are exploring issues with UPD and others. For years Safe Ride usage was tied to academic programming – classes and libraries. Since August 18, origins and destinations are not academic related. With 6 vans and 75 people looking for a ride in a one hour period, the calculated wait times are high. We suspect the person requesting the ride calls other providers (taxi, uber) but the ride request in the queue causes consequences within the Safe Ride demand flow. Working with UPD about “what problem is it that we are trying to solve” and how to address these surge requests. During those high demand times, there are more cancelled and no show rides than completed rides.
- P&T is working on the issues with Student Council, Black Student Alliance, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences Council, Office of the Architect, etc.

Other Updates:

- Black Bus Stop on McCormick will be honored with a historic marker as part of the “change agent” initiative. Details and dates TBD.
- CAT and Jaunt fixed route service continues to be fare free. CAT still running reduced service. Jaunt has returned to full commuter service. CAT and Jaunt exploring going permanently fare free, but nothing official yet.
- Afton Express service started 9/1/2021 providing commuter service from Staunton/Waynesboro to Charlottesville. The service was promoted at UVA with direct emails and recorded promo by President Ryan! Fares were waived during September and several promos on Grounds are scheduled for October and November to encourage ridership and reduce costs for riders. The most recent geo-code of employee residences show about 12-15% of UVA workforce is commuting from Staunton/Waynesboro so the service could be very impactful. The schedule is designed around traditional 8-hour and 12-hour shifts. \$3 one-way fares will start in October. A 10-ride fare card is discounted to \$2.50/ride. More information, including the promotional video, can be found here: <https://parking.virginia.edu/afton-express-new-commuter-option-stauntonwaynesboro-area>

Saliva Screening Clinic Update:

- Through Thanksgiving, saliva screening location at the Stadium is operating Monday-Thursday and at the Emmet/Ivy Garage on Fridays. In December/January, operations will move to Emmet/Ivy Garage Monday through Friday, and in Spring 2022, operations will move to the Stadium Monday through

Friday. Patient parking was reduced at the stadium on 9/22/2021, returning 20 parking spaces back into the E3 inventory.

FY23 Budgets:

Preparing for Board of Visitors deadline for student fees. Major influencers for UTS will be labor costs and need to build reserves for non-diesel transit fleet. Depending on other sources, the range of increase per student to pay for the changes is \$10-\$15 per enrolled student.

Construction and Project Updates as of September 2021

| Project | Status and Notes |
|---|---|
| Student Health and Wellness Center | As of late September, all Kinesiology and Student Health operations have moved to the new building and displaced permit holders are moving back. This project will be removed from future read-aheads. |
| Contemplative Commons Enabling Project (ie, add 40+ spaces to the R1 lot) | New spaces in the R1 parking lot are complete. This project will be removed from future read-aheads. |
| Contemplative Commons | Estimated start date November 2021. Displaced permit holders will be offered nearby options. Bus stops on McCormick Road at Ridley Hall and Central Grounds Garage will be relocated to the south. |
| Muscular/Skeletal Center on Ivy Road | Expected completion late Fall 2021. Phased occupancy expected over several months. This project will be removed from future read-aheads. |
| North Grounds Parking Garage Study | Final report expected soon. |
| Electric Transit Buses | First order of 2-4 buses expected January 2022. Delivery expected summer 2023. |
| Millmont Replacement Facility | Study completed. No next steps identified. This project will be removed from future read aheads. |
| Emmet/Ivy Garage Renovation | Will be mobilized in phases. Permit holder relocations anticipated for student storage parkers. |
| Ivy Corridor | 6 overlapping projects started, impacting the Emmet/Ivy intersection and UTS service to the Emmet/Ivy Garage via Rothery. Many years of impact are expected due to multiple UVA projects plus City SmartScale plus private hotel across the street. This intersection is going to be painful for a little while longer. |
| Brandon II Housing | Project has started on west side of Brandon Avenue between South Lawn and Bice House. K2 parking lot now permanently eliminated, and permit holders have been relocated. Construction will close west leg of Brandon. Two-way traffic will operate on the east leg. |
| McCormick Road Access | Reconfiguration of the Chapel triangle to include gates is in design. Funding TBD. Drawings available upon request. |

Potential Topics for 2021/2022:

- McCormick Road Priorities (joint meeting with Safety and Security?) – how to find balance between conflicting priorities (bus service on McCormick versus more space for bike/ped)
- P&T Financial Model

- Electric Bus Fleet Initiative – Due to the university’s carbon reduction goals, P&T will not be buying any more diesel buses
- North Grounds Parking Garage Study is very close to being published.

Potential Topics for Future Meetings:

1. *Safety and Security* - Off grounds violence around housing areas away from Grounds relate to transportation issues including service area, type of transportation offered, potential walking escort program in UPD, new ways to manage Safe Ride (potentially identify goal and purpose, potentially create mustering points, etc.)
2. Construction Updates - Emmet-Ivy Intersection transportation impacts will linger for the next 2-3 years. There are ½ billion dollars in work just on UVA buildings on the site including School of Data Science, Hotel and Conference Center (early 2022), Karsh Institute of Democracy (2023), and Arts Center (which requires some additional fundraising before dates can be estimated). The Emmet/Ivy project is bringing on another project coordinator to focus on communication. City Smartscale abuts but is delayed at least another year. The current work in Emmet is sanitary and storm work which will extend to Ivy Road as well. The project hopes to be out of the main part of the streets by the end of the year. The pedestrian tunnel under the railroad tracks is part of the City Smartscale project so will not happen for a while, but a 60” utility tunnel will be bored under the railroad tracks by the UVA project. The UVA project also builds stairs connecting Sprigg Lane residences to Ivy Road. Committee member Mark Stanis can provide a briefing at a future meeting.
3. *Drone Capabilities* - FM now has a drone and Brian Williams of FM is a certified drone pilot. If anyone needs a flyover of a certain area, he knows process to get approval.
4. *Balancing demand for hourly, daily, and multi-day parking with annual permits and properly communicating options* – The Engineering School reports that removal of daily/hourly E3 options at the start of the academic session was not well communicated by P&T. As options are turned on and off based on availability, it is difficult on the parkers. Communication is a challenge because of the transient nature of that customer and the fact that the platform is a third-party provider. It was reported that in the Engineering School, people rushed to re-purchase an annual pass because suddenly the daily/hourly parking was no longer an option. It is true that the availability of hourly/daily parking will be turned on and off throughout the year based on capacity so P&T needs to work to be more transparent about the nature of transient and hourly parking. In certain areas, P&T should be clear that it should not be relied upon and is truly a transient feature. This issue is applicable to E3 plus a few other high demand areas including Brandon Avenue, Culbreth Theater Garage, Facilities Management.
5. *Parking Access in now Larger Lots* – Committee members have fielded some feedback about new faculty not being able to get close in parking and concern over selling a lot to full capacity, thus creating longer walks for parkers at the edges of the lot. The ability to leave and come back to a reserved lot must be retained for permit holders, particularly for faculty and staff who have an off-site lab or office but need access on main Grounds. That said, P&T must be using parking spaces to the full capacity
6. *Updated Grounds Plan* - Architect’s office is updating grounds plan. Bill will keep us informed on engagement opportunities and could update at a future meeting. The consulting team has visited Grounds and will have engagement opportunities.

7. *McCormick Road Safety/Pedestrian/Bike/Transit Discussion* – UTS is not currently serving McCormick Road weekdays before 6PM. Also, there are no gates on McCormick Road to restrict traffic. Classes are in full session so ped/bike/scooter/car conflicts are back on McCormick Road while there is also call to return transit. This is a potential topic for a joint meeting with General Safety and Security.
8. *New Transportation Modes* – personally owned electric power devices like skateboards are becoming more popular. Does this need to be discussed?
9. *Funding Models* - Should transit be considered infrastructure support because it reduces carbon footprint and gives UVA land use choices? As an alternative to student and user fees, could this be an argument for UVA to fund transit in the same way a municipality invests in transit rather than funding with user fees?