Parking and Transportation Advisory Board (PTAB)

Meeting Minutes for November 16th, 2021

**Members present:** Jessika Antinori, Glenn Barrington, Jennifer Bennett, Lily Bruce, Justin Burch, Robert Hendry, Colin Humphries, Abhishek Kasula, Jon King, Mike Knodler, Tom O’Donnell, Martha Patrick, Amy Stout, Ben Weitz, Greg Wheeler, and Metin Yavuz

**Jon King, Parking Services Update:**

- Student permit sales sold out prior to the start of the year for every permit available to students.
  - Usually Parking Services sells around 3,000 student permits before the start of the fall semester, this summer 5,859 permits were sold.
  - Some room was found for students in the faculty and staff parking lots where available.
  - Students were also placed in the parking lot across from Olympia.
  - Most employee lots are already waitlist only.
  - In the past demand for permits is around 10% per class, this year it has been around 20% per class.
    - Undergraduate demand this year was 14% for freshmen, 31% for sophomores, 32% for juniors, and 23% for seniors.
  - The solar canopies summer project in Lot 22 was finished days before student move in for the fall semester.
  - Lot 49 summer project experienced supply chain issues, and finished later than expected, but all solar canopies were installed by 9/24/21.
  - With the Newman Center moving locations parking services lost 28 total parking spaces.
  - Lot 32 and 34 went through optimization projects in the summer to add more parking spaces.
  - Lot 32 is prepping for a dorm expansion project, and is scheduled to close at the end of this year with more than 200 parking spaces being displaced.
  - Permit holders are warned to clear out lots near McGuirk Stadium when they purchase their permits.
    - In addition, two emails are sent, lawn signs are placed, variable messaging signs are programmed, and text messages are sent to permit holders in the displaced lots before game day to ensure cars are removed.
    - Less than 30 cars per game are being towed away on game day this year in comparison to the usual 100+ cars.
  - Rob – Parking Services doesn’t get any money from athletics from game day parking fees. We would love to leave cars there and let them live their lives. We don’t get ticket or tow money for it. We fought that tooth and nail.
  - Jon – I’m always looking for other suggestions to be able to get people out of the lots without getting them towed.
• Martha – Where do the cars go when towed?
  • Jon – Ernie’s. We would love to tow them to another part of campus but the University won’t allow it because they say it’s a liability if their cars get damaged in the other location, or on their way.
• Amy – Where do the 3,000 other people put their cars?
  • Jon – Good question. We tell them they can park in lot 32 and 34, but they end parking anywhere else on campus. They often will park near 12 or 24, sometimes up by Butterfield as well.
• Next summer Lot 65 on Holdsworth Way is getting sidewalk work done and new electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.
• The dorm expansion project is going to be a new apartment style dorm with around 600 beds.
  • Apartment style dorms have higher demands for parking at around 50%-80%.
  • Parking Services is looking at taking over the tennis courts and updating Lot 28 to accommodate the expansion creating a parking lot with a total of 425 parking spots.
  • This updated parking lot will accommodate the students with permits living in the honors college.
• Amy – Do we charge for the weekend youth tournaments like the lacrosse tournament?
  • Jon – It is paid through the athletics assessment, because it’s almost virtually impossible to charge every person coming from other places.
  • Amy – Presumably athletics is getting some usage fee for the fields.
  • Jon – Yes, but we don’t get a cut of that just like with the football games. We get a dollar amount based on how many people come to the tournament.
• Jon - The document that guides Parking Services was last updated in 2012, and it needs to be updated. I would like to send it to the PTAB group before the February meeting to get everyone’s thoughts on it. I will send it out in January.
• Jessika – [Have you noticed if] with more students on campus has there been more tickets than usual?
  • Jon – We went very gently in the beginning, so there does not seem to be more parking tickets. I will have to double check. Our main concern has been safety, so we’ve been mostly monitoring handicap parking and such.
  • Jessika – so there has been less tickets?
  • Jon – Yes.
  • Glenn – As a reminder [ticket revenue] doesn’t go to Parking Services.
  • Jon – Correct, ticket revenue goes to the scholarship fund.
• Jessika – Do you know how many people take advantage of the scholarship fund, or would I have to ask Financial Aid?
  • Jon – You would have to ask Financial Aid, we don’t have anything to do with it.
  • Amy – I can get the answers for the February meeting.
  • Glenn – Thank you, Amy. That would be an eye opener for everyone.
  • Jon – A couple of years ago someone brought up in this meeting that money from tickets on handicap parking lots should go to the Disability Services scholarship fund, and we were able to do that. It wasn’t a very large number, but it was great for Disability Services.

**Glenn Barrington, Transportation Services Update:**

• The new 2021 buses are on the road; the biggest visible difference between these buses and the other is the updated driver barrier.
If a department on campus has a vehicle, it gets serviced and maintained at the Fleet Garage.
  • There are only 4 full time mechanics at the Fleet Garage.
  • All fuel cards are being replaced this year through the Fleet Garage.
• 90% of ridership at UMass Transit Services (UMTS) is University related, so UMTS experienced a huge decline in ridership at the beginning of the pandemic.
  • Prior to the pandemic the ridership average was 16,000-18,000 per weekday, now it is around 12,000 per weekday.
• UMTS recruits year round, but mainly on campus; fewer students means fewer recruiting possibilities.
  • 42 new drivers have hired for a total of 57 new drivers in FY20.
  • Ideally UMTS would hire and train 70 new drivers every year.
  • Due to the severe driver shortage, there have been schedule modifications.
• The driver shortage is not unique to UMTS, there is a CDL driver shortage nationwide.
• This year UMTS has been given permission to recruit outside of UMass with the other four colleges.
• Mike – I wonder if there is a way to get creative with offering parking permits for free to employees of Transit.
  • Jon – We already give Transit a discounted rate of about $140 a year for permits, but we can’t do much more than that.
  • Glenn – That’s a great idea though, and we will emphasize our parking permit options for recruitment.
• UMTS has been trying to get a pay increase which is a struggle through the University.
• The students at UMTS drive buses, drive field trips, dispatch, work with maintenance, train, cover our front desk, and much more.
• Glenn – I think that the students that work here are some of the hardest working students on this campus. I am awfully proud of them.
• Students need to show their student IDs to ride the B43 for free when campus is in session.
• The tripper buses, buses that are scheduled to pick up passengers that were left behind by overloaded buses, have been added to the bus tracker.
• Most passengers have been using their masks properly, but the UMTS drivers are still receiving abuse from some passengers.
  • Buses are equipped every morning with extra masks for passengers who may not have one.
  • Any belligerent passenger is dealt with by removing the passenger, sometimes with the help of local law enforcement.
• A pilot route, B79, has been funded for the next two years running between UMass and Worcester.
• New driver barriers will be installed in the entire fleet this winter.
• The completion of the electric charging project has been pushed to February/March of 2022 after encountering supply chain issues.
• The newest generation of electric buses is very quiet, and gets 230 miles of range per day which works with most shifts at UMTS.
  • No new training needed for the electric buses since the operation is not very different, and will be put on route during the winter session.
  • Two more all electric buses are scheduled to arrive in the spring of 2022.
• Tom – When you say they are really quiet it makes me nervous for pedestrians. Is there anything that makes some noise?
  • Glenn – We will have to work with our mechanics to see what can be done.
• The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) is paying for the new driver barriers, and the PVTA pays for all new buses that UMTS receives.

Zoom Meeting Adjourned at 1:39 pm.