

Parking & Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting

Tuesday December 2, 2014

9:00 am, VU 567

MEETING NOTES

Present: Doug Adelstein, Zach Dugovich, Bernie Housen, Karen Izumoto, Wendy Johnson, Christopher Loar, Kunle Ojikutu, Brian Sullivan, Kurt Willis, April Markiewicz, Donnell Tanksley, Julia Gassman, Carol Berry, Paul Mueller

Guest: Rich Van Den Hul, Vice President for Business & Financial Affairs

1. Introductions were made of all members present

2. Review Updated PTAC Charter and Charge

Vice President Van Den Hul provided an overview of parking from his perspective starting four years ago when he was first hired at Western. One of the common themes he heard about during the first six months of his onboarding process was concerns about parking, parking services, and transportation services on campus. Many of the concerns regarded Parking Services finances, maintenance, and operations. VP Van Den Hul summarized them as follows:

- **Finances:** Operating at a deficit
Lack of transparency – Where funds are being spent and on what
Lack of sustainability – Revenues not meeting operational, maintenance, and enforcement needs
Lack of long-term forecasting/financial projections
Grandfathered in fee rate structures that do not cover the actual cost of the parking space.
- **Maintenance:** Lack of a maintenance plan for lots
Lack of a long-term capital plan to maintain, repair, and replace lots, equipment, lights, etc
Reactive responses to maintenance needs
Stormwater compliance issues with local, state, and federal agencies due to untreated runoff from north and south campus lots, as well as the Lincoln Creek Transportation Center (LCTC). Fines may be levied if not addressed.
- **Operations:** Staff positions and duties not clearly delineated
Inefficient use of staff time in manual entry and database management
Customer service lacking, no credibility with campus community

Policies and procedures not transparent, at times confusing or contradictory
 Fee rate setting process and procedures inconsistent and perceived as arbitrary
 Changing priorities and goals, e.g., parking structures to be funded then not

3. Changes Initiated:

a. Operations Review of Parking Services

- (1) Brought technology to greatly improve staff efficiencies, e.g., T2 that allowed linking of the online parking permit application process to Banner, thereby eliminating the need for manual entry of data.
- (2) Review of staff positions and duties (ongoing)
- (3) Changed funding lines for certain staff positions at recommendation of PTAC

b. Reestablished the Parking and Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC)

In 2012 the PTAC was formally reestablished as a university standing committee with a new charter and charge. Several recommendations of the 2012-13 PTAC that were approved and implemented resulted in the following expenses being removed from Parking Services' budget and assumed by the university:

Employee Bus Pass Subsidy	\$70,000
Sustainable Transportation Program	\$27,451
Public Safety Support Functions (staffing)	\$143,431
Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) program	\$25,000
<u>Lincoln Creek Bond Payments</u>	<u>\$200,000</u>
Total expense savings	\$465,882

The PTAC also proposed increases for some of the parking fines that were also approved, though how much increased revenue to Parking Services from this source is yet to be determined. Other recommendations that would generate additional revenue to Parking Services of approximately \$76,000 were also proposed and are in progress.

c. Creation of the Parking and Transportation Capital Implementation Advisory Committee (PTCI)

This committee was created to address capital improvements to and maintenance of the university's parking lots to develop a long-term maintenance, repair, and replacement plan. Its purpose was to alleviate this task from the newly reestablished PTAC so that it could focus on parking rates, policy review and financial review. The PTCI, with Rick Benner as its chair, completed its work in spring of this year and was disbanded. The 2014-15 PTAC will take over the PTCI's duties and will review their plan in the coming months.

4. Review Updated PTAC Charter and Charge

VP Van Den Hul reviewed the updated Charter for the 2014-15 PTAC. Those items highlighted in yellow are the tasks it should focus on completing by spring 2015. Addressing item 1d of the Charter (Financing plan and rates to implement parking capital plan) will be a major task for the PTAC as it balances the long-term needs of the university with what it is willing to pay for as a university (Item 3a Parking system financial statement and ability to meet needs.) He encouraged the committee members to be respectful, inclusive, and remain focused on the tasks at hand. Parking Services financial information will be made fully available to the PTAC in January to assist in its discussions and decision-making. VP Van Den Hul reiterated that all proposed parking permit rate increases will be discussed with the unions and PSO prior to any implementation.

Item 2b Determine and recommend means of enhancing campus “way-finding” assistance, needs to be done and VP Van Den Hul will contact Rick Benner about serving as a member of the PTAC and assisting it in its charge.

VP Van Den Hul quickly reviewed Item 3b that has been completed with the university paying those expenses, resulting in the addition of almost \$466,000 back to Parking Services’ budget. The university did so in recognition that these expenses were not appropriate for permit-paying employees and students to subsidize for the benefit of non-permit-paying individuals. The retention of the funds in Parking Services’ budget addressed the deficit under which it has been operating for the last several years. It will not address the backlog of repair, maintenance, and replacement expenses.

He reiterated that substandard paved and gravel parking lots, along with stormwater runoff issues from them, are not consistent with Western’s values, nor are they sustainable over the long-term. Moreover, they pose safety and health issues, as well as potential liability to the university.

Rick Benner will be able to assist the PTAC on Item 3c (Lincoln Creek Transportation Center funding model and needs) based on work provided by a consultant and feedback from the former PTACI.

VP Van Den Hul wants the PTAC’s recommendations on permit rate increases to address the financial, maintenance, and capital improvement plans by spring 2015. Proposed rate increases should be moderate, e.g., \$6 - \$10/year and phased in over time until the backlog is addressed in the next five to six years. After that he envisions small increases may be needed to keep pace with inflation. Rate increases should be responsible and based on data, identified need(s), and PTAC’s guiding principles (http://wwwtest.wvu.edu/ps/doc/pk/PartOne_Parking_Transportation_Advisory_Committee_Recommendation%202-2....pdf).

The unions and PSO will be informed throughout the process of what is being discussed and proposed to ensure transparency in the PTAC’s actions.

5. Question and Answer Period

Housen stated that any rate increase will require buy-in from the campus community and the perceptions regarding Parking Services customer service are not favorable. Moreover, their complex and convoluted policies hinder rather than facilitate those services. VP Van Den Hul acknowledged that Parking Services has a “huge inheritance tax” that it is now trying to address with the help of the PTAC. He suggested that once the PTAC has addressed its charge it might want to determine whether there are other issues that haven’t been addressed. It might also want to consider whether an ongoing parking policy review committee be formed or have the PTAC take that on as part of its long-term charge.

6. Items from the Floor

Markiewicz stated she had received a couple of emails, one from Carol Berry and one from Julia Gassman regarding topics they would like the PTAC to consider. Berry would like the PTAC to:

- Provide feedback to the WWU Sustainability Advisory Committee on the Transportation chapter in its WWU Sustainability Action Plan,
- Consider the President’s charge to the committee in regard to transportation issues and solutions for the coming year, and
- Support the Plan with recommendations on the transportation component

Markiewicz will forward Berry’s email message to the PTAC since it contains more detailed information.

The second request from Gassman regards fast traveling bicyclists through parking lots, specifically 17G, though other lots may have the same issue. Car drivers parking or pulling out of parking spaces in 17G have almost collided with bicyclists that are using the lots as shortcuts to get around campus faster. The speed of the bicyclist coupled with poor visibility due to weather conditions and early afternoon darkness increases the potential for a vehicle to hit a bicyclist. The suggestion was made to Parking Services that parking lots be designated as bicycle dismount zones.

Housen and Dugovich suggested that the best solution is to have designated bike lanes on campus. This would promote getting bicyclists where they are preferred, facilitate their access to and from campus, and effectively separate bike traffic from vehicles and pedestrians. Markiewicz stated the recommendation had been made more than a decade ago, but administration rejected it as conflicting with the campus character as a pedestrian campus. The committee had recommended using a different brick pattern rather than painted lines to delineate the bike paths as an option, but there was no administrative support. Markiewicz suggested that the PTAC consider this issue at the beginning of the year and formulate a recommendation since the PTAC members present were in full support of the idea.

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 am.

Approved unanimously January 13, 2015.