

Traffic and Parking Standing Committee Zoom Meeting

Monday, December 13, 2021 – 1:00 p.m.

Attended:

Sam Patterson, Hal Robinson, Richard Bradley, Greg Snyder, Elisabeth Alexander, John Lobur, David Whitcomb, Jane Mahan, Dean Hansen, Paul Caffera, and Lauren Olivia; and Cassidy Savage, non-committee member, transcribing minutes

Discussion:

- **Agenda**
Sam welcomed those in attendance and went over the agenda.

- **Department of Parking and Transportation (DPT) Brainstorm Results**
 - Beginning Fall 2022, License Plates as Permits. Incrementally removing decals and hangtags.
 - Enhance Marketing and Communication for permit sales, event conflicts, and education parking, traffic, and transportation.
 - Reduce Traffic and Congestion between class periods due to vehicles searching for available parking spaces. Exploring Parking Guidance Systems/Software.
 - Incentivize Park and Ride lots.

Sam mentioned the discussion about the Easy Retro board process and discussed results.

Sam communicated that much of the standing committee was in favor of the transition to license plates as permits, removing hangtags and decals. He continued that for fall, we are thinking that residential student decals will remain initially and that Commuter, Park-N-Ride, and Faculty/Staff permits will be removed and license plates will serve as permits. Sam explained that this is standard among many other universities, including Mississippi State.

Sam further explained that this would help eliminate the challenge of moving hangtags between vehicles for Faculty and Staff, Commuter, and Park and Ride vehicles. Instead, vehicle operators would just register the vehicle online under their permit. Normal restrictions would still apply and only one vehicle on campus at a time, however, there would be no more waiting for permits via mail and would eliminate most needs for visits to the Parking office on campus with most interactions online. Sam stated that eventually we would like the ability to add rental and loaner vehicle plates on the day being used logging onto your account in the parking software.

- Paul Cafferla asked how rental vehicles would be handled in the meantime, at which point Sam reassured that we are hoping for an easy implementation of this goal. He stated that the process is in the beginning phase, but processes would be worked out before next school year. Sam mentioned that we are also discussing the possibility of automatic permit renewals in the future.

In addition, Sam stated that DPT looks to enhance marketing communication for permit sales and incentivize Park-N-Ride lots. Sam mentioned that the department is exploring some parking guidance systems for which he may be able to obtain additional information from a colleague at LSU before the next meeting in January.

- John Lobur stated that through his experience in serving on the Faculty/Staff Traffic Appeals Board, he sees this move to license plates as permits more efficient and fair for faculty and staff on campus.
- Paul mentioned the change in procedure Mike Harris attempted to implement some years back that prohibited people was backing into parking spaces so that Sam would be aware of those challenges ahead of time. Sam responded that we are focusing on providing solutions for those that are opposed before implementing this in the future. See more information and discussion under Front license plate section below.

● **Parking Proposal Options**

The Traffic and Parking Leadership has been brainstorming potential options for the 22-23 academic year; the proposals are as follows:

- **Virtual Parking Permit Adoption** - The idea is no more hangtags for Faculty and Staff and no decals for Commuter, Park and Ride, and South Oxford Center. Your license plate will be your permit after you purchase one online, please note that only one vehicle may be parked on campus at one time if you have multiple cars under your name registered. The same restrictions and designations for permit purchases apply to the permit system. As such, our parking software system will only display the type of permit each customer is eligible to purchase. For example, Faculty and Staff are eligible to purchase Faculty and Staff permits. Ole Miss students living on campus must purchase residential zone permits and will continue to have a decal.
 - Benefits include –
 - Increased speed and convenience, no more waiting for a decal or hangtag in the mail or having to make a trip to the parking office.
 - Register multiple vehicles on the same parking permit.
 - Eventually Rental and loaner cars license plates may be added to the system the day being used

- No replacement fees and better for the environment
- The possibility of automatic renewals in the future if you purchase a long-term virtual permit.
- **SOUTH LOT becoming a mix-use parking lot.** More hourly and discounted daily rate mix use parking options, like what was implemented at South Campus Rec and Insight Park (in progress). Students and others want more daily and hourly parking locations

Sam stated that from students and others on campus, there have been requests for more daily and hourly parking options on campus. The increase in timed parking near the Union has been successful and popular. He mentioned that we are looking into more mixed-use lots, similar to what we are now doing at the South Campus Rec Center parking lot. He added that we are in the process of doing this at Insight Park and that we are looking at this option for the South Lot, as well.

- **Front License Plate Option** - Beginning in July/August 22 for those who wish to continue to park in a space with their vehicle front-facing the drive aisle.

For those that want to continue to park in a space with their vehicle front-facing in a drive aisle, we will offer custom Ole Miss License plates that can be displayed on the front of your vehicle and linked to your permit. Details include the following, as similarly explained by Mississippi State University:

- *The license plate is only active and available for purchase by those with an active annual permit.*
- *The license plate will expire with the annual permit, but the plate will be renewed with the purchase of another year's annual permit, a new plate will not be needed each year.*
- *A custom Ole Miss license plate is a one-time cost of the estimated cost of \$30 and can be purchased in the Parking and Transit Services Office.*
- *Only one license plate can be purchased per permit.*
- *The Ole Miss-issued license plate cannot serve in the place of a state-issued license plate.*

This adoption has been successful at Mississippi State, as the plates are popular among the campus community and run for \$30 per plate. Sam added that we will do research and get samples of what those plates might look like. Cost is something we are still working on, but Sam later explains cost is not the driving factor for these.

- John Lobur mentioned an event he witnessed once when a larger truck was backed in, that the back of the truck covered the sidewalk and hindered accessibility for an individual in a wheelchair.
- Captain Jane Mahan brought up that from a safety standpoint and for those needing to back their vehicles in due to behaviors learned from victimization for varying reasons and questioned whether accommodations would be made for those unable to purchase a front plate. Sam voiced his appreciation for bringing up such concerns and agreed that there should be a way for the department to make accommodations in unique circumstances. Paul supported these statements, adding that the department could accept documentation from UPD, Violence Office, etc. when accommodations are being considered.
- Dean Hansen spoke from a traffic engineering standpoint regarding vehicles backing in and the conversation regarding vehicles blocking sidewalks. He stated that backing a vehicle in is safer from an accident perspective. Dean added that the issue with backed-in vehicles blocking sidewalks can be easily mitigated through wheel stops in parking spaces. Hal Robinson added that the Tad Smith sidewalk was part of a capital project plan before Covid-19 times that had been put off, but that it should be addressed this coming summer. Hal explained that the plan was to expand the sidewalk.
- **Rate Increases Necessary due to necessary garage maintenance cost, parking garage bond payment and future parking garage planning, increased base level wages, technology costs, and Oxford University Transit Costs increasing (See page 7 and 8 in PowerPoint).**

Sam then discussed the topic of parking permit rate increases. He stated that we had had several years with no permit increases, which needs to be discussed.

Sam explained that maintenance and preventative maintenance costs for parking garages are crucial factors to make to make sure lifetime use of the parking garages continues. He added that it is easier to pay for maintenance costs than paying for a new garage.

Sam said that we still have bond payments for both garages and UM's Masterplan has a new garage currently show a new garage in the future across from Music and Baseball and we must think strategically as an auxiliary budget for the long term. There are several creative ideas on how to use the first level of the garage, including a new Bike Shop, retail options, campus offices, etc.

Sam continued and touched upon other costs, including technology, EV (Electric Vehicle) charging stations, better analytics, and reports, and Oxford University Transit increases.

- John Lobur asked if any of UM's capital funding could be used towards these costs, at which point Sam explained that Parking & Transportation is an auxiliary and that we do not get state funding.
 - Greg Snyder stated that while he does appreciate that fees need to increase, raising parking fees for Faculty/Staff is a tough sell (pay to park where one works), and the amount for those that earn under \$30k/annually seems arbitrary. He added that hourly parking is a convenience that people would pay more for.
 - Richard Bradley broke down the numbers in an explanation of the raised fees. He stated that Faculty/Staff that are now payroll deducted for their permit at \$10/pay period, would now be payroll-deducted \$10.55/pay period, only 55 cents more than what they are paying now. Richard added that Commuter fees are going up due to demand and that we are hoping to influence behavior through pricing. In addition, he stated that although there will be some pushback, we have the challenge of losing inventory of Commuter lots over time.
 - Dean Hansen agreed that our permit pricing is the lowest he is experienced in comparison to other Universities at which he has worked.
- **Vote- Hourly Rate moved from \$1.25 to \$1.50, and Daily Visitor Rates from \$3.00 to \$4.00**

Sam then informed the group that we would like to move forward with adjustments for hourly and daily visitor rates and adopt an incentivized approach in getting folks to use the South Lot for hourly, daily, and permit use.

Sam asked members present to use the Zoom Chat feature to submit their votes.

Zoom Chat Vote:

Those in favor: Dean Hansen, Jane Mahan, Elisabeth Alexander, Lauren Olivia, David Whitcomb, and John Lobur.

Greg Snyder did not vote in chat and may still be considering

EV Charging Spaces Update

- We are switching to a managed EV Charging space system by ChargePoint – the US's leading national EV charging system. ChargePoint is a fee-based option where DPT provides the location and power to the site but purchases no equipment. We pay a monthly service fee but are not responsible for service/maintenance or part replacement in the event of failure. We can manage the units and charge usage fees if/as approved by the University.

We are adding four new parking spaces at the north end of the 1st floor of the Residential Parking Garage. New units will be ChargePoint CT4000 type units with two charging ports each. 1x at Lamar, 1x at Turner and 2x at Residential Garage (total of 8 spaces)

- Dean questioned whether there are other projects associated with this, such as power and metering. Hal responded that there is a work order to provide power to the locations, but metering has not been decided yet. Richard commented that the charging stations in surface lots would need a separate meter, while those in the Residential Garage would not.
 - Greg questioned whether there would be an upcharge for those that have EVs. Sam mentioned that there could be a different permit cost for EV charging, but vetting will continue with leadership.
- **Q & A** -Elisabeth Alexander questioned allowances for Pavilion Garage permit holders for Basketball events, and voiced concerns regarding high demand Faculty/Staff parking areas being affected by students with Pavilion Garage permits on these event days. Sam agreed to review with leadership and consider some parking lots be exempt from

Dean Hansen brought up the traffic circle on Chucky Mullins's drive getting backed up significantly in the evenings, causing a 15-minute delay for people coming from Hathorn Rd. to get onto Chucky Mullins. He stated this is due to those turning left to head east on Hwy 6 and questioned whether this would be something to discuss with the City of Oxford. Sam stated that this issue had been mentioned in the Infrastructure Act meeting with Steven Holly and Perry Sansing and hopefully soon will be discussed with MDOT for future improvements.