

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Supplemental Meeting

February 15, 2013, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

460 J.C. Kellam Administration Building

Attendance: Ms. Nancy Nusbaum, Mr. Joe Richmond, Dr. John Blair, Dr. Jaymeen Shah, Ms. Sharon Wilsford, Ms. Susan Davey, Mr. Juan Guerra, Mr. Cody DeSalvo, Mr. Thomas Gleason, Ms. Kasandra Moreno (for Nicole Shipes), Chief Ralph Meyer, Mr. John Root, Ms. Linda Sterling (Scribe). QUORUM PRESENT

NO AGENDA

Handouts:

- University Roster Listing for Transportation Services Advisory Council
- Notes from February 4 Meeting with Associated Student Government
- February 12, 2013, E-mail Listing Questions from Staff Council
- Notes from February 13, 2013, Meeting with Faculty Senate
- Letter from Dr. Melinda Villagran Regarding Texas State Parking Issues
- Presentation on Why Parking Permit Rates Need to Increase
- Memorandum from Nancy Nusbaum to Council of Academic Deans Regarding Bus Service During Finals
- Presentation on Why a Bus Fee Increase is Needed
- Faculty Concerns Regarding Elimination of the Interurban Bus Routes
- Flyer – CARTS Bus Service Between Austin and San Marcos

Ms. Nusbaum began the meeting by asking members to review the University Roster Listing for the Council and the purpose of the Council, noting that two key responsibilities are providing a conduit for community input and providing advice regarding policy recommendations, and advised that establishing fees is not policy.

Dr. Blair stated the problem with that is we had a discussion at the first meeting and it wasn't that before. I realize that is the Cabinet's doing and not yours, but they are next. Ms. Nusbaum advised the last body was disbanded.

Ms. Nusbaum advised the letter received by the Council from Mr. Nathan McDaniel has several inconsistencies; where it asks to come up with a process that involves the students and faculty more, there is no opposition to that. Ms. Nusbaum stated she has talked to Nathan and the letter states in part a proposal to increase the bus fee has seen only slightly more participation...and the first time he became aware of the bus fee changing was when he had read the campus report issued for the Board of Regents in November 2012. On April 16, 2012, Mr. Nance presented to students attending a presentation about the bus fee and Mr. McDaniel was present. In May of 2012, Mr. Richmond attended an ASG meeting. May 24 and 25, 2012, is when we took a motion to the Board of Regents to increase the fee from \$78 to \$95. The Board of Regents

mentioned a referendum would be needed. On June 18, 2012, Mr. Richmond and I asked to meet with Mr. McDaniel and Ms. Sibley; they came to our conference room and we talked about transportation issues including a referendum. On October 5, 2012, Mr. Richmond mentioned the bus fee at this body's first meeting and it stated in the minutes the fee would increase by FY15. We had Linda pull her raw notes and correct the minutes to reflect the correction. On November 13, 2012, we emailed Mr. McDaniel again to ask when the vote would be held. Ms. Nusbaum advised that she is new to this procedure and is not familiar with the ASG process. Ms. Nusbaum apologized for not knowing. Mr. McDaniel informed us then the vote would be in April, and after that was the November board meeting when he learned about the cap and the change and realized a referendum would need to be held. On December 5, 2012 Mr. McDaniel emailed Ms. Nusbaum about the date and Ms. Nusbaum requested a meeting at that time with Mr. McDaniel and Ms. Sibley; they did not schedule another meeting until January 15, 2013, as that was the soonest they would be on campus. Ms. Nusbaum wanted the Council to understand as the letter was distributed to everyone on the council, that there were plenty of opportunities that arose when the bus fee and referendum were discussed. Ms. Nusbaum stated she is not opposed to working on a process with ASG so there is no communication issue in the future, but she did want to clarify.

Mr. DeSalvo advised that he and Ms. Nusbaum talked about a communication breakdown and his issue is one of communication. Mr. DeSalvo stated he has been monitoring the situation with the bus fee since April. ASG's requested role has been to provide a referendum and in order to do that we need to be told when you require the referendum. We understand the fee needs to be increased but for us that does not necessarily mean a referendum needs to occur spring 2013. The point was to get to the information that a bus referendum is needed in spring 2013. Those key words were not articulated to the leadership. Ms. Nusbaum stated she did not know it had to be done that way and thought because there was a spring election that is when referendums are held.

Ms. Nusbaum advised that the goal of this meeting is to provide input on the parking permit increases that are supposed to be taken to President's Cabinet on February 19, and that she did not want to get into revising process today because there was not enough time.

Dr. Blair stated he thought this meeting was going to be about why this committee exists and what its charge is; he stated we keep saying committee and that is what it should be, a pro forma exercise giving stakeholders an impression they have a voice, and he encouraged anyone who could resign to resign from this.

Ms. Nusbaum advised she was asked by the President's Cabinet to go out to talk to different groups, such as ASG, Staff Council, Faculty Senate, and Resident Hall Association. Mr. DeSalvo advised that Ms. Nusbaum has devised some potential solutions and in his opinion they are very important.

Dr. Blair asked if they were going to talk about the process and what this committee is supposed to be doing, because if that doesn't happen he is going. He stated that this is more pro forma stuff that is meaningless to me and the Faculty Senate. Dr. Blair leaves.

Ms. Nusbaum advised she didn't get any comments from councilmembers in e-mail regarding permit price increases, and pointed out there are notes from ASG, Staff Council, Faculty Senate, Dr. Rebecca Montgomery, and Melinda Villagran, who was also at the ASG meeting with her class, and whose input came via the Dean

of Fine Arts, containing some suggestions that have to do with parking permits. Ms. Nusbaum stated we have where we are today with regard to the sales on parking permits as well as the resolution that the student government passed with regard to improvements for Transportation Services and advised the council could address those first. She further advised we do not have comments from the Resident Hall Association because their Secretary/Treasurer was taking the notes for Ms. Nusbaum as she presented and is unsure when she will get those notes. Ms. Moreno advised they should be in by next week.

Ms. Nusbaum acknowledged receipt of a Memorandum and Resolution to Improve Transportation Services and stated they are similar but the memo does not cover everything. Mr. DeSalvo stated the Resolution outlines Senate's thoughts and the memo contains sentiments about legislation.

Resolution #1 - That the Edward Gary Street Garage (EGSG) be designated an All Zone lot for the remainder of the year in order to establish the lot as a desirable location on campus for parking:

Ms. Nusbaum advised this has been discussed at length with parking staff and making it an All Zone lot will have an adverse impact on Parking Services deficit this year. A discussion ensued with the following options being suggested:

- Leave gate up for remainder of semester (will affect debt service to the building).
- Let Resident permit-holders park in the EGSG. (would set a precedent and then need to change back to regular use).
- Open it for free during final exams and turn it back to park and pay June 1. (first cars to campus are contractors who might take up all the parking).

The Council did not arrive at a decision.

Resolution #2 – That the Apartment, Commuter, All-Zone, and select restricted zones be reorganized into a modified “lot by lot” system whereby permits are sold at a rate of increasing cost according to proximity to central campus with no restrictions for purchase based on residential or commuter status:

Ms. Moreno stated the concern they hear at Residence Hall meetings is that it is like paying for the garage you have at home, and Butler and Blanco Halls do not have a lot of parking.

Ms. Nusbaum advised the current policy states green permit is only available to residential students and those permits are oversold. The proposal for fall is we only sell the 2,677 green spaces we have to housing students first.

The following points were discussed:

- It is not fair for commuters to have to wait until September or October to purchase the permits, and that everyone should be able to buy them at the same time. Residential students would have issues with that because safety is another factor as they work and get home late. A lot of students don't know what resources are available, e.g., Residence Hall vans.
- There is a need to communicate the available services. It was suggested that signs in garages could list resources such as Bobcat Bobbies and Residence Hall vans; late buses; work with RAs and RDs; provide an information pamphlet during orientation; put signs in the dorms with telephone numbers.

- ASG would be willing to pay for ads in the University Star, or signage.
- Because some students are required to live on campus they should have the ability to buy parking first. Add parking just like you would a meal plan.
- Allow residential students and commuters to buy permits at the same time if we can ensure resident student safety with thorough marketing of the resources
- Commuter access to green permits sooner.
- Residence Hall exclusivity to green permits until move in.
- Residential housing will be full in the fall, so those permits will go.
- Green permit-holders cannot find parking now so that would become even more difficult if it is opened to commuters.

Resolution #3 – That the general public, except during special events, be allowed to park on campus between 7:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. every day. That the carpool program be expanded and marketed for those riders displaced by the BTI cancellation.

- There is a strong night student population that will not buy permits then.
- Need some system to replace BTI so senior students may complete their degree. Students who have more than 60 hours usually cannot transfer more than those 60 hours to other institutions, so seniors will not be able to transfer their junior year credits, creating a burden on them to have to redo coursework at another institution.
- CARTS provides service from Highland Mall to San Marcos.
- A more robust carpooling system and Ridesharing are being explored.

Resolution #4 – Explore the possibility of inter-agency agreements within the region for busing service to and from San Marcos and Austin and San Marcos and San Antonio; namely Capital Metro and VIA Metropolitan Transit.

- Transportation Services is currently exploring all possibilities.

Resolution #6 Additional bike racks be installed in areas seeing high cyclist traffic.

- Alleviates number of people on the bus or parking.

Resolution #7 – Increase motorcycle parking.

- Increase the number of motorcycle parking spaces.

Comments from Open Forum Meetings

ASG - Carpool isn't a good solution for visually impaired.

- Graduate students and professor of record do not get discount on Red Restricted permit even though they have a lower wage. (Departments may reimburse them as well as non-tenure or tenure track lecturers per course).

Staff Council – Parking permit purchase with a 12 month payroll deduction instead of 9 months. (This option is being explored.)

Faculty Senate – If we increase the threshold for discounted permits to \$35,000 what impact would there be? (Another \$100,000 in lost revenue; we are collecting data and recommendations will be brought back to this Council.)

Dr. Shah asked how involved we are in communication and trying to get buses organized to replace the BTI. Ms. Nusbaum stated CARTS advertises a service, and we are taking names, phone numbers, and e-mails so we may get back with people about options.

Ms. Nusbaum pointed out a memo to the Council of Academic Deans (CAD) in the meeting packet so they may disseminate the information to faculty; she also mentioned that answers to a lot of the questions she received are in the Parking Rules and Regulations, for instance, staff did not know they could ride the bus. She also advised Transportation Services is talking about moving the buses from the quad bus loop the Monday after spring break, to the Woods Street Bobcat Trail pick-ups to eliminate the need for buses to travel on Sessom Street during finals (and construction).

Mr. DeSalvo asked if there are any plans to integrate parking permit purchases with tuition on a payment plan. Ms. Moreno stated if you could implement that for residents they would be more willing to purchase permits.

Ms. Nusbaum advised that the only way to do a payment plan is if you are an employee of the university, and she was unsure if the Banner System would allow that.

Bus Fee Increase

Handout included in meeting packet is presentation given to ASG about why a bus fee is needed, and what happens if it is not approved. Funds will be used for alternative transportation, carpool, bikes, and may not be used to pay parking debt service.

Open Discussion

The following points were discussed:

- Increase permit prices gradually instead of 135% hike for resident permits.
- Increase all permits to distribute it evenly.
- It has not been communicated adequately that residents do not have to buy a green permit. If you want to park where you live it will cost more; if not, you can park on the periphery and there are services to get you back and forth. The closer and more convenient the parking, the more expensive it needs to be.
- Commuter students are getting the best bargain, they are 68% of permit-holders; housing is 12% of permit-holders and 33% of revenue; Restricted is 14% of permit-holders and 22% of revenue. More people are finding places in the city and alternative ways to avoid the permit.
- If we can put value at the Mill Street Lot, it takes pressure off these other groups. Put the buses there; add value to it; people buy permits, and it starts working.
- Stadium Lot is not filling up past 8 or 9 o'clock. If you think point to point is the key, make Bobcat Stadium the point. Use Stadium Lot as your point to point and you have just doubled the lots you serve. Until you fill up Bobcat Stadium, there is no reason to serve Mill St.

- If you are serving a commuter parking lot, the next stop needs to be campus. To go away from campus, enter traffic, go by Bobcat Village and then work your way to campus is not an efficient way to run a bus route. The current construction is both a curse and a blessing. Traffic congestion from construction has changed the game and the game is going to stay changed for a couple of years. Adjust to the new game; put out a short bus run and get it to campus; put the buses where the masses are; get them on the bus and get them to campus.
- Will the point to point service be extended to Bobcat Village?
- New RFP/contract process will involve professional route designers to address these questions.
- Suggestion to change to windshield permits that can be transferred from car to car; these are industry standard.

Ms. Nusbaum advised the Council that much of what has been suggested today is being considered and discussed; she asked that the Council have meetings every month for the next while, and then go to every two months, and finally back to quarterly.