3-11-2003

Master Parking Plans

Clara Krug
Georgia Southern University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/faculty-senate-index

Part of the Higher Education Administration Commons

Recommended Citation
Krug, Clara, "Master Parking Plans" (2003). Faculty Senate Index. 182.
https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/faculty-senate-index/182

This request for information is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Senate Documents at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Senate Index by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.
I request that Bob Chambers, Ron Core, and Joe Franklin address the Master Parking Plans

Submitted by: Clara Krug

3/11/2003

Question:

I request that Bob Chambers, Ron Core, and Joe Franklin address the Master Parking Plans. Some Senators may not have been available to attend yesterday's forum. For those of us who attended, it would be helpful to learn what revisions have been made as a result of student, staff, and faculty suggestions at the forum.

Rationale:

Additional parking lots have the potential to benefit or adversely affect faculty across campus. Yesterday, students, staff, and faculty made at least several realistic suggestions to cope with the need for additional parking spaces without harming the environment. It would be appropriate to hear a response suggestions that we could share with our constituents.

Senate Response:

Minutes: 3/27/2003:

Krug (CLASS) wondered what faculty voices had been heard re: the parking plan, noting that Director of Auxiliary Services Joe Franklin had told her that his understanding was that Mills and other faculty on the SPC (Martha Abell and Trey Denton) were the Senate (i.e. faculty) voice. Mills noted they act as faculty members but only within the parameters of the Strategic Plan, that is, deciding whether issues do or do not fit its established framework. Abell (COST) confirmed they do not act as a “voice of the faculty” per se on the SPC, but such voices were heard by Franklin at the open forum on parking and the General Faculty Meeting.
Allen (Moderator, CLASS) noted that he and GSEN (Georgia Southern Environmental Network) chair Ray Chandler sit on the Physical Planning Committee, to which the Master Parking Plan was presented in late February; they had not felt that was sufficient. He noted Joe Franklin and Bob Chambers would again present the plan later in this present meeting.

Presentation on the Master Parking Plan

7. Presentation on the Master Parking Plan

Ron Core (VPBF) introduced the presentation by noting that the campus-wide physical master plan presented at Fall ’02 convocation was not detailed enough re: parking, so that fall he asked Joe Franklin (Director of Auxiliary Services) and Bob Chambers (Director of Parking and Transportation) to develop a separate master parking plan, which they did in consultation with President Grube. It is this plan that was first presented to the Campus Physical Planning Committee in late February, and subsequently to an open forum, at the General Faculty Meeting, to student groups, the Dean’s Council, and to Student Affairs Directors. [Secretary’s Note: Perhaps worn out by this itinerary, the Power Point presentation equipment quit and could not be persuaded to work again. Joe Franklin was thereby forced to solo a cappella.]

Franklin noted that construction of the IT building eliminated 354 spaces, and student dissatisfaction with parking was already high: the ACT survey report from Fall ’01 rated it lower than any service on campus and lower than the national average (he noted parking is, however, a traditionally low-scoring service), they were receiving lots of complaints in the parking office, and President Grube was hearing complaints at community meetings. Hence the Master Parking Plan was conceived;

Two areas have critical over-demand: Russell Union and the West End (Henderson Library to College of Education). The West End has the biggest deficit of commuter spaces because of recent and current building re: Business, Technology, Education, Information Technology, and Nursing/Chemistry. Franklin then presented a list of issues (without benefit of clarifying Power Point visuals):

- Library construction will eliminate 169 faculty/staff spots; these will be replaced re: shifting, for example putting 24 behind Lewis Hall and shifting 54 student slots to faculty/staff in the Education lot.
- Dorman Hall will be torn down and its 142 spots turned commuter, which should make the Russell Union area okay.
- Hanner area is okay.
West End needs several new lots; the first will be 300 at Forest Drive and Old Register Road. Franklin noted receiving much opposition re: cutting woods, but planned a 120 foot wooded border to obscure the lot.

- re: aesthetics, the Engineering Technology lot will be moved back from the building and expanded; there will also be landscaping.
- re: Dorman Hall again, once gone its place will be taken by 118 commuter spaces.
- Herty Drive, from Georgia Avenue to Cone Hall, will become a pedestrium in Fall ’03 (part of the plan to move traffic away from the center of campus).

[Secretary’s Note: pedestriums will be closed to regular traffic but allow use by service, emergency, and other such traffic.]

Allen then asked biology professor Lorne Wolfe to speak for GSEN. Wolfe noted GSEN’s particular concerns as the Herty Pines and Old Register proposed lots re: incalculable loss from forever destroying natural forests for a short-term parking fix. GSEN feels the plan was promulgated on inaccurate assumptions: With RAC and Paulson Stadium, there is abundant campus parking. Also, the plan’s assumption that students must park within a “15 minute walk” of all their classes is incompatible with the proposed pedestrian-friendly campus. GSEN offered four alternatives:

- Encourage students via incentives like PE credit to walk or bike to class.
- Create a mass transit system. This will be implemented apparently when this University reaches 17,000. Why not start it immediately, to minimize the growing pains of this new system?
- Offer carpoolers high quality parking options.
- As Franklin had mentioned elsewhere, offer more Friday classes to alter traffic patterns and therefore reduce the need for creating more lots.

Wolfe noted student support for these initiatives via a blind survey he conducted earlier in the day of 144 students from across the campus. He offered six results: 46 percent did not know that they could park for free at Paulson Stadium or the RAC. 85 percent said they would use a mass transit system if it was coupled with free parking at the RAC or Paulson. 92 percent said they would carpool, especially if they would obtain a parking pass in a prime lot. 51 percent said they would be willing to leave their car at home and walk or bike if they got PE credit. The vast majority of students said all students are going to complain no matter what system they have unless they all have a dedicated lot beside every building. Not a single student had chosen GSU because of its parking. Wolfe also suggested the parking lot funds could be used to hire faculty; President Grube pointed out that Auxiliary funds cannot be applied to other University needs. Carol Cornwell (CHHS) wanted to speak as a representative of the School of Nursing, which is about 250 students and 25 faculty, the majority of whom are women, to call for
a closer look at the wetlands that are going to be destroyed, partly because of the
natural habitat issues, but also because of the documented fact that sexual and other
forms of assault occur on campuses in areas that are not well lit and that are on the
periphery of campuses.

David Stone (COST) asked what, if any, studies have been done re: implementing a
transit system with peripheral parking. Franklin said the cost depended on the number
of students being moved: A stopgap system moving 1,000 students would cost about $12
per semester (paid by all students, not just the 1,000). To move 3,500, improvements to
the Paulson lot, buying buses, etc. means about a $2 million start-up and $700,000 per
year ($7 million more over ten years). And we don't know if or when we'll reach the
17,000 student point when transit is absolutely needed. Stone suggested we will reach
that point some time; if we wait, we'll have to cut down every tree left to accommodate
it. Franklin noted improvements to Paulson would be sufficient because the number of
appropriate locations for parking lots has just about reached its end. Stone asked if
Tech and UGA use transit; Franklin said they do via a mandatory transit fee for all
students, which is what we would have to do; because it's HOPE eligible, this would be
a hard sell in Atlanta right now. He believed the current plans to create more parking
lots are an acceptable solution to the transit problem. Allen (Moderator) noted that
Franklin had cited $2.7 million for transit at the General Faculty meeting, but today had
cited between $7 and $9 million. Franklin noted the lower figure was to move 1,000, the
higher for 3,500.

David Robinson (CLASS) congratulated Parking on how well they've done so far on
ridding the central area of campus of traffic. But he noted almost no alternatives to a
“everybody drives and parks” method have been tried: He noted that if a person wants
to bike some days and drive others, that person must still pay a full,
every-day-of-the-year fee. He suggested trying systems that would encourage less
frequent use of cars, though that option would be open if needed Robinson felt this
would reduce demand for parking spaces. He called himself a fairly wacky extremist;
often, he may be viewed on a bicycle.

Franklin noted the philosophy Parking has used to date is “cheap parking for everyone,”
not discouraging people from driving to campus via alternatives of which Parking is
aware, like parking zones or higher fees.

Visiting faculty member Kathleen Comerford asked on what studies the 1,000/3,500
student systems and the cost projections for transit were based, and asked for
clarification of the costs to students under the current system: What is the differential
between the cited and forbidding $7 million figure for transit and the cost figure for
students re: parking? She noted her doctoral school charged a separate fee for parking,
one for a bus pass. She also disagreed that current forest and wetland areas are appropriate places for parking lots. Franklin tried to sort through her issues: The 1,000 students are in stadium area housing and could easily be required to use a bus; Parking computed how many buses, etc. to reach the $2.7 million figure. The 3,500 students are these plus those in housing about a ten minute walk from the stadium; that’s $7 million because more buses would be needed. All costs are re: service from Paulson to Education. Door-to-door or around town would be even more. An inaudible question prompted Franklin to say a mandatory transit fee charged to every student, rather than a separate and user-paid bus fare, would be our method of paying for transit. Spread over 15,000 students it would not cost each student much; for 1,000/3,500 only paying, it would be counter-productively prohibitively expensive.

President Grube noted, with trepidation, to the Senate that faculty are the second most important group on campus; students are #1. He noted two issues that were raised that he said fall within the purview of this Senate. The curriculum issue of rewarding students with class credit for walking or biking, and the issue of scheduling Friday afternoon classes to ease pressure on midweek peak-traffic hours. He noted 98% of students want “more parking spaces.” He also question how many people in the room including himself, would be willing to park at Paulson and be bused in to center-campus. [Secretary’s Note: Though no count was taken, President Grube noted late that a lot of hands were raised at this point.]

Krug asked how many buses we already own. Franklin said buses used for various events are rented by other campus entities, not Auxiliary Services; neither he nor VP Bleiken knew the cost.

Chuck Johnson (COBA) noted that 3,500 students paying a user-only fee would pay about $100 each; an all-student mandatory fee would be quite low and eminently doable. [Secretary’s Note: $750,000 divided by 3,500 equals about $215; divided by 15,000 equals $50. Our current parking fee is $54.] Johnson also agreed Friday afternoon classes would cut traffic; as current Friday afternoon classes show, students simply won’t come to class.

Susan Trimble (COE) noted many present had seen the Parking presentation several times and noted repeated themes: a search for alternatives, the offer of a short-term solution to a major long-term problem, and the lack of data showing that we need more parking right now. She asked about the time-line for considering the recent input from students and faculty, and implementing the parking plan. President Grube replied that such input will be considered in the recommendation made by Bob Chambers, Joe Franklin, and VP Ron Core to the President’s Cabinet, which must then decide the issue in the next couple of weeks. He also said students should not bear the cost alone. Cyr
(CLASS) pointed out that faculty paid now to park on campus, and he assumed they would be treated in future the same as now, paying the same as and along with the students, including fee hikes. President Grube had not heard that in the discussion, but would be glad if that’s how faculty felt; it sounded to him like faculty were willing to share the burden. He expressed concern that an increased cost – in a year with no raises and a likely health care premium increase – could be absorbed by faculty, but would be huge for some of the lowest paid University employees.

Krug (CLASS) noted many faculty have ridden buses, while many of our students have not; it would be a wonderful education for them. She said she was not being facetious. She noted also that the Statesboro Herald had recently alluded to bus transportation and the difficulty of change boxes; she noted University systems use passes, not change. She also suggested a sliding fee scale for non-faculty employees. She then noted the rarity of people actually asking her to talk, but the following remark had been requested: She suggested “no raises” should mean “no higher fees” if our campus controls those fees, as with parking. She added that no trees are “incidental,” tests will get students to Friday classes, and walking would aid the health of pearshaped students and imminently diabetic faculty. She had noted earlier that she herself uses a lot of moisturizer.

As he was recognizing John Brown (COBA), Allen (Moderator) noted his desire to bring this discussion to closure. Brown agreed and suggested immediate conclusion because of the late hour and other important issues still on the agenda. Allen said he was not ready to stop right away and asked if there were further questions. Mike Nielsen (CLASS) recalled the video shown at Fall Convocation and discussion of coordinating the campus and the Statesboro community re: traffic. He asked how that coordination was progressing. President Grube mourned the Power Point machine’s demise, noting that the Fall video predated the revised parking plan pictures that would have been shown, so there would have been changes apparent. He cited Bob Chambers and Joe Franklin’s expertise in the practical day-to-day, operational-level issue of parking, and that for Auxiliary Services – unlike in a classroom – students are customers. Purely on-campus changes re: traffic and parking we handle internally; anything involving off-campus issues is the subject of thorough communication with the city. He praised Franklin, Chambers, and VP Core for putting forward a proposal for consideration, and said the responses have brought many good points forward. Nielsen couldn’t figure out how HOPE impeded a transit system here, since other campuses have HOPE as well as transit. President Grube fielded this question, noting that Moderator Allen had asked him to be brief: HOPE can be used or all mandatory fees, so there’s always pressure to keep such fees within that amount,
partly because each year we only get a fraction of what we ask for re: even those mandatory fees.