Report from the Open Forum on
Transportation and Commuter Issues
Tuesday, January 28, 2014
3:00 – 5:00 p.m., Dakota Ballroom in Davies Center

1) Welcome
   • An overview of the forum was provided
   • Guidelines for the break-out session and the question/answer session were provided
   • Presenters were introduced

2) Comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan for campus
   • Presentation by Christina Hupy (Sustainability Fellow), Bob Eierman (Master Plan Sub-committee), and Emy Marier (Director, Student Office of Sustainability)
   • PowerPoint

3) Bus tracking program associated with Eau Claire bus system and information about on-campus shuttle bus service and inter-city bus services
   • Christian Paese (Director, Student Senate Information Technology Commission) and Becky Shannon (Parking and Transportation Director) presented
   • See PowerPoint below for additional information

4) Becky Shannon presented information about on-campus parking
   • PowerPoint was presented

5) Heather Kretz (Interim Director of Admissions) and Jason Mathwig (Chair of University Senate Physical Plant Planning Committee) presented information about how other UW campuses deal with visitor parking, especially during “big events”
   • UW System Visitor Parking Informational Sheet

6) Each table was asked to discuss the questions at its table and the results of these discussions were shared
   • Questions/Responses:
     • What transportation/commuting options would persuade you to leave your car at home/not drive to campus?
       • Transit
       • Safer commuting options
         • The city doesn’t enforce snow shoveling ordinances very well
         • Many sidewalks are dangerous for much of winter
         • The city often plows snow from street into sidewalks
           • (e.g., Harding Hill people don’t know in advance if they can safely walk to campus)
         • The paint used on many pedestrian crossing zones is dangerously slippery
         • Bus service from some areas (e.g., East Hill) is more time consuming than walking because of bus transfer station
     • Should have a policy for aggressive drivers in bike lanes
     • Should have showers on lower campus
     • Intersections where left turns are common are extremely dangerous for pedestrians
     • Should have a city-wide shared ride system
     • Make parking at the Priory attractive
     • Develop more park-and-ride sites off-campus
     • Covered bike parking would be nice
     • Provide free or low rent bicycles
     • For those without a parking permit, offer a few one-day parking permits
     • Provide shuttle service from regional areas, such as Chippewa County, Dunn County, etc.
     • Bus-rapid transit from home during rush hour (7-9 a.m. and 4-6 p.m.)
- I-phone/smartphone app to track bus
- More direct route to campus via bus
- Clear abandoned bikes to make more room on bike racks
- Access to a car during the day, like a zip car when one has off-campus obligations
- Improve safety for walkers and hikers on State Street hill
- Improve traffic flow on bridge
- Water Street bridge/Summit Avenue area is very hard to cross
  - Should improve safety, accessibility, and ability to cross road
- Improve traffic/bike flow from Park Avenue to Summit Avenue
- Safer and better bike routes to campus and within and around campus
- Safer pedestrian crossing on State Street
- Route 9 in the evening
- Earlier start time for bus service
- Bus routes are not convenient
  - Day and evening schedules are not the same
- No bus routes in Third Ward
- Should add some bus routes
- More direct bus routes to campus
- Transfer hub should be on campus or near campus
- Better and more convenient weekend bus routes
- Designated places to shower or change clothes in Schofield for bike commuters
- Secure indoor bike parking within the buildings
- Bike rack spacing
- Lockers to store gear
- Some of us live too far away to be able to bike or walk
- Cars should stop for pedestrians on State Street
- Decent covered bike racks and secure storage
- In communities across the US (and probably Canada) there are artistic and creative bike racks
- Why don’t we have bike racks that are art/sculpture all around campus
  - Form and function would be distinctive; could be distributed across campus in effective ways
- What do you believe should be the key parking priorities for: a) faculty, b) staff, c) students, d) visitors to campus/community members?
  - Safety
  - Why pay for parking?
  - Honor state issued permits to allow parking for visitors with disabilities
  - There should be an advisory committee for parking issues made up of members of the university and surrounding community
  - Move Admissions Office across the bridge so that parking is available for normal campus visits
  - Visitor’s Center should be across the bridge
  - There is a shortage of parking for residential housing
  - Should be a lower permit rate for parking across the river
  - During winterim, allow parking in “S” spots
  - Should be able to print an online parking pass (1-3 days)
  - Pull down the homes next to the Visitor lot and create parking for visitors/potential recruits and their families
  - Visitors to campus should be a priority
  - Handicap parking should be a priority
  - There needs to be more availability on lower campus
  - Don’t allow overnight street parking
  - Visitors should be able to park close to campus (not across the river)
  - Can the metered spots in Schneider be purchased for a day for visitors?
  - Ability for visitors attending weekday campus activities to park on campus for free
  - Suspend ticketing for duration of particular events/activities
• Priority should be given to faculty/staff, then students, visitors and community members
• Why are the meters enforced after 6 p.m.? A student who goes to Towers in the evening to use the Center for Writing Excellence tutor session should not have to pay a meter. The meters at Towers do not seem to be highly utilized.
• I reject the premise of the question. We can’t figure out how to treat all our human resources fairly and equitably? We have to have winners and losers? Come now. Tell me what the difference is between a, b, c, and d in terms of their transportation needs. Getting to and from campus is expensive, stressful, and challenging for all of us, maybe for different reasons but nobody gets a free ride. Talk to people; don’t let facilities decide our fates without our input.
• No freshman and sophomore cars
• If parking is an Admissions tool, then we should have a conversation about Admissions, not parking
• Does parking generate revenue? Then there is a disincentive to reduce the need for parking (i.e., driving to campus)
• Better signage
• Extenuating circumstances should be considered

• If you could improve one aspect of transportation and/or commuting to UWEC campus, what would it be and how could this be accomplished?
• Remove meters from prime spots near Davies
  • Reserve these spots for bicycles, car pools, and busses
  • Why reward people who don’t support parking by purchasing a permit by giving them prime parking spaces
  • Remove meters and replace with bike racks
• If you walk across the footbridge as your first introduction to campus we’re in trouble
  • That rusty, patched, ugly monstrosity is your first impression of campus
  • No matter how beautiful the rest of campus is, that first impression is hard to overcome
  • Replace the rusty railings
  • Completely redo the deck instead of the tacky patch look that we have now
• Work with the city and other major employers (CVTC, Sacred Heart, Mayo, City/County government) and work on developing several proper bike routes to campus, extending bike spokes from the city, out 3-5 miles and making proper structural changes that advance safety and flow (e.g., Brackett/Plank Street Hill)
• Fix footbridge pedestrian-bike crossover on south side of river
• Improved bicycle access from south side
  • Putnam Heights only access is State Street Hill
  • Could reduce 4 lanes to 3 lanes and add bike lanes or run dedicated bike pedestrian path through Putnam woods with a switchback on the hill
• Allow faculty who drive job candidates to park in Visitor’s Lot
• Smart car sized parking spaces
• Improving bus system so outer parking areas would be better utilized
• Traffic flow around Hibbard and Phillips
  • People who drive around searching for parking make it dangerous for pedestrians and bikes
  • It is stressful
  • Everyone needs to be more aware that parking lots are also where people walk so it creates conflicts
• Garfield and State St. stoplight does not recognize bikes and it takes a long time for pedestrians to cross so they cross elsewhere or go through Hibbard lot
  • Solution would be to put a bike/pedestrian bridge over State Street or tunnel under State Street to funnel bike/pedestrian traffic safely across the street
• Cover the footbridge
• Education: all aspects of pedestrians, cars, bicyclists
• Motorcycle spots are narrow
• More parking closer to lower campus
• People who ride-share get a higher priority for prime spots
- Build a parking ramp and cover the footbridge
- Avoid ticketing visitors, especially Admissions and Foundation guests
- Day passes
- Designated spots for Admissions and Foundation
- No ticketing during event days
- Access and flexibility
- Showers for bike commuters on lower campus
- If you cover the footbridge it would make Water Street parking more desirable in winter, but possibly make it too hot in the summer

7) Question and Answer session
- Garfield Street
  - Parking is on one side of the street and for those that reside there cannot get out of the driveway safely and cannot see pedestrians
  - If parking was moved to the other side of the street (non-residential side) not only would it pick up 4 or 5 parking spots but it would be safer
  - It was reinforced that the parking of cars on the residential side of the street is dangerous
  - The recent 8 feet of no parking on either side of the driveway is not being followed/enforced
  - Motorcycles tend to park in those areas
  - Parking on Garfield should be eliminated
- Police Allocation comes out of the Parking revenue and it is surprising that it should come from this area
- Concerns about the footbridge at the pedestrian and bicycle crossing as it is an accident waiting to happen
- Covering the footbridge may be a good idea
- Water Street parking might become more attractive
- Policing aggressive drivers
- Need additional bike lanes
- Snow shoveling is not being enforced
- The lack of plowing makes it dangerous for pedestrians and bikers
- Bikes are an accident waiting to happen on both ends of the bridge
- Free bicycles would be useful
- One day permits would be helpful for those that usually commute by means other than a car
- Shuttle from regional areas
- Improving the bus system
  - Have a centralized area that commuters can park in where a bus comes every 5 or 10 minutes
- Avoiding ticketing visitors because it leaves a bad taste in their mouth
  - A day pass or a few more designated spots
- No ticketing during major event days
- There needs to be a larger degree of flexibility
- You shouldn’t put any paths between buildings for one year then pave the paths
  - Some paths on campus do not seem convenient
- There are visitor parking concerns with employers as well
  - It is not the most welcoming impression when they have to walk across the bridge
- Car sharing would be an excellent idea for this campus
- Bus transits from campus to home during rush hour
- Safety on State Street hill is of concern
- Improving the Park Avenue and Summit Avenue area
- If parking is dictating our admissions then something is wrong
  - If parking generates revenue then we need to have a conversation about revenue and if parking has an effect on admissions then we need to have a conversation about admissions
- The visit day experience is critical in a student’s choice on whether to come here
- We have control over structural changes that can drive the cultural changes
- Ridesharing requires a cultural change/shift on how Americans approach moving between places
• Maybe freshman and sophomores should not have cars on campus, but that would have impacts/consequences as well
• For the departments that are trying to hire new personnel, you cannot park in Visitor Parking
• State Street Hill has one lane that could be repurposed for a bike lane
• Transit
  • Transit from campus to the mall on weekends could be improved
  • Our international students have a difficult time with transportation
  • Transit should include the weekends
• You could register a license plate number instead of using a pass
• Accident information and access: not a lot of accidents on campus as the highest speed limit on campus is 25 mph
  • The City Police Department has an analytical person that we could have access to if needed
• The hill is the biggest problem
  • Mostly for bikes and skateboarders
• As far as the funding other options are being looked at
• In the Spring and Fall we have an expanded bike patrol program, but use mainly education
  • Tickets for biking violations are at $20.00
  • The “hill” will soon be closed to through traffic
  • We encourage education more than enforcement
• Violations for people who drive through a cross walk do happen, but there is a certain percentage of the population who need to be educated as both cars and pedestrians should yield
• There is money in the Garfield Avenue redesign for restructuring the footbridge ramp
  • Would like it if there was no crossing that would take place
• Part of State Street is our jurisdiction
  • At least twice a year the City Police Department comes close to campus to do the pedestrian versus motorist awareness and enforcement and we do partner with the City on that
  • Also have a Water Street and downtown enforcement campaign
• Water Street is dangerous
  • You have to have heightened awareness
  • Is in the campus jurisdiction and so it is watched
  • This area could be looked at for restructuring/reengineering
  • The Garfield Avenue project will happen on campus soon and in 2016 and 2017 the Water Street bridge will be replaced and it will be 20 feet wider and expanded when it is done
    • Both of those will cause significant changes in the overall area
• For those of us that have children there is nowhere to park in the “F” spots after 3:00 p.m.
  • “G” spots cannot get taken until after 6:00 p.m.
  • According to Parking this can be revisited, but it has not come up as a concern
• Hibbard’s “G” spots are abused by people who are parking there prior to 6:00 p.m.
• In terms of covering the footbridge, one person had been told that covering it was not an option due to the wind patterns
• The educational mission of the institution and the notion that the greatest impact that we can have on sustainability and hopefully the lives of the students is to change the culture and mindset
  • For many years the idea of a parking ramp has always been brought up, but we all know the cost per space is high
  • Curious on a cost benefit analysis on the funding incentives to transportation alternatives in lieu of the expense of new parking structures/places
    • We do not have a philosophy or policy that helps drive this decision one way or another
    • The campus master plan addressed some things, but this is one piece of what is missing in this picture as well as the university community’s concept of how this should work
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- Incentives for biking
  - The Zap Program was looked at
    - It is a barcode thing and it is a piece that goes on your bicycle and every time you ride past one of the ZAP counters you get checkmark and once you get 50 checkmarks you can get some kind of incentive
    - Looking at using it with the bus system and pedestrians as well
  - There is a lot of potential
  - The Office of Sustainability is looking at investing in that
- Confused about the incentive to reduce parking because it is a money making thing
  - You want people to buy permits, but not drive their car
  - We want more parking spots
  - We can promote all sorts of incentives, but it is not a structural incentive, in fact it is a disincentive in terms of the role of Parking at the university in terms of finances
  - In terms of bussing, if we could map where our permit holders live then we could take advantage of density of our permit holders

8) Closing remarks from the University Senate Chair and adjournment
- Thanks to everyone for coming and sharing their thoughts

Flip charts feedback/comments
- Faculty/Staff Parking
  - With what they are charging for parking they could easily build a multi-level parking facility in the parking lot across from Hibbard and make a ton of money, plus solve the problem (some agree and some disagree)
    - You could have metered parking and student permits on one or two of the floors to create additional revenue
  - I walk or ride my bike to work for environmental reasons. One of the difficulties I face is when I have a meeting off campus for University business and when I have medical appointments. Other universities have made an effort to encourage people to utilize alternative means of transportation by providing “X” number of free parking passes each year to be utilized as needed by the person who uses an alternative form of transportation-that would help in these situations. (x2)
  - The lot north of HFA is 1/2 – 1/3 empty most of the time, so why can’t one park for free
  - Contractors take up too many spots given to the “F” permit holders
    - As well as non-university employees
  - Option to purchase individual day parking permits (one-day passes) (x2)
    - I usually walk, but it is a major hassle when one needs to drive
  - Clarify parking for “G” on upper campus
  - Clarify handicap policy at meters since it is different than state policy
  - Why do people who pay $555 for “G” permits get tickets when they need to go elsewhere on campus for meeting, classes, etc.? Please make parking easier for us aging staff/faculty
  - Have a reserved number for each lot only then there would be a place for each person to park guaranteed
  - Students should not be able to park in “F” spots after 3:30
- Classified Staff Parking
  - If we can’t close the university for severe weather during winterim at least let those who have to come to work park on campus
  - Make all lots reserved parking for a fixed number of people
    - No “F”, all “G”
  - One of the few employers who make you pay for parking
  - Additional “F” rows should be added behind Davies

- Student Parking
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- Some form of parking on lower campus would be nice for “R” permit holders who also have jobs on campus
- Too much traffic is created with students parking behind Davies
- Parking garage
- Commuter permits only
- Resolve faculty/staff parking issues first

Visitor Parking
- It would be nice if visitors/guest lecturers could park without having to obtain a physical pass on the other side of the river
- Allow visitor parking for campus folk who are hosting visitors (like candidates), but don’t normally park on campus
- Ensure recruiters and employers can park in the visitor’s lot
- Lose the two permits per office rule or at least make exceptions
- Allow visitor parking for student teacher supervisors who are on campus four times per year (8 hours total)
- Need more visible spots/signs
- Allow prospective students/families to park closer
- Need more visitor parking
- Allow visitors to park in metered lots with a pass if the visitor lot is unavailable
- Inform visitors how to get to UWEC without a car
- Have an advisory committee for parking made up of students, faculty/staff, and community
- Resolve faculty/staff parking issues first

Off-campus Community Parking
- Parking on the 200 block of Garfield Avenue has become unsafe
  - Should ban parking and put bike lanes on this block (x2)
  - Move the parking across the street
- No overnight parking
- Like to see people getting exercise
- Street lights across State Street so it’s safer to walk at night (x2)
- Collecting parking fines and towing charges is not “economic impact”

Bicycle, Motorcycle, Moped Parking
- More bike racks are needed at the base of stairs to McPhee
- Covered bike parking (x4)
- Lower campus showers for students, faculty, staff, etc. (x2)
- Bike share system like in Madison and Twin Cities with card swipe membership (x2)
- Shovel bike racks on campus (particularly near entrances to library (x2)
- Bike registration needed (x1 disagree)
- More motorcycle parking
  - Perhaps reconfigure for cars during cold weather then go back to motorcycle parking when warm

Eau Claire City Bus Service and Inter-city Bus Service
- Improve State Street bus frequency (all day)
- Create a major transit corridor
- Better serve the Third Ward
- More off-campus routes
- More frequent service (x2)
- Better access to underserved areas
- More frequent evening service (x2)
- Extend downtown Phoenix Park area
- Sunday Service
  - Would allow for more student access to weekend jobs
- Bus service on Sundays
- More frequent Route 9 during the evening for classes, studying and student involvement in organizations and sports
• More inter-city bus service to Madison, La Crosse, Twin Cities (x2), Duluth (x2)
• Indoor bus shelter on campus for Route 9
• Missed opportunity with Centennial Hall

Pedestrian Issues
• Cover the footbridge
• Fix the traffic flow on the footbridge (i.e., the crossing of pedestrian and bikes)
• Police the Garfield/Park corner more aggressively for stop sign runners
• Enforce sidewalk shoveling laws with a fine
• Work with the city to better enforce clearing of the sidewalks so pedestrians are not walking on the street (x2)
• Strictly enforce pedestrian right-of-way in crosswalks and work with city neighborhoods to improve safety at major pedestrian crossings, such as Lincoln Ave., State Street, Summit, etc. (x2)
  • Work to educate the community that this is the law (x2)
• Better signage and perhaps lights at the State Street crossing by Hibbard lot
• Enforce crosswalks (especially State Street) as drivers do not stop or even slow down for pedestrians
• Do something about the traffic lights so that they are more pedestrian/bike sensitive
• Need bike/pedestrian tunnel or bridge at State Street and Garfield Avenue intersection
• The sidewalks on the new campus mall do not connect buildings and were designed to create bike/pedestrian conflicts

On-Campus Shuttle Bus Service
• Extended hours during the week
• Late night options (x2)
• A schedule sign at the stop
• CyRide at Iowa State (show your student ID) is great. Free for residents/students and only a small fee for the community

Miscellaneous
• I understand the parking and transportation unit is a large source of income for the university and it supports very important programs like the campus police. However, I would hope that they can learn to have more flexibility and compassion in situations where students or faculty present with medical needs for parking. For example, a new faculty member presented to the transportation unit on crutches and with a boot on his foot. He was attending an orientation session and was requesting a special parking pass for the day. The unit declined his request as a result of him not having a note from his medical care provider. I understand the need to have rules and guidelines, however, there are times when compassion needs to take precedence over the rule.
• Do not require disabled permits to purchase a “F” or “S” permit as they should park for free (x2)
• When we close off Garfield to traffic, maintain disabled parking especially by the Library