Focus Group #1 – March 6 MUB Lamprey Room

Chris Clement – TPC Chairman Welcome Message

- Consider town-gown impacts shared goal of making community better every day
- 15 years since last time we updated the plan...appropriate time for review
- We need to get outside perspective for the TPC. This is time for us to listen to you. Your voice does matter – so speak up and talk about any issues that are bothersome...both new and those with tribal (15 year knowledge) around the table
- Looking to the future – technology is going to be important. Need to be a ‘smart community’ in which Town and UNH use technology together (sensor technologies/storm impacts)

Steve Pesci (showing slides)

- presented framework of the TPC15 process 18 distinct constituents to reach out to directly
- summer distillation by Campus Planning/UTS staff
- late September presentation to TPC
- proposed community forum in October
- November TPC finalization followed by set of recommendations for new President in December

Attendee Introductions:

Amy Maki – AM – CPA Project Manager representing Advancement

Mike Ferrara -MF – Dean School Health & Human Services

Steve Metcalf -SM– Athletics

John Larson -JL– Admissions

Jim Lawson - JL2 – Durham Town Councilor – values our coordination

Nora Molloy - NM– MUB

Joseph Verro JV– FT - CE student - Senior at UNH (Durham/off campus)

Kyle Kwiatowski – KK- Civil Engineering – Transportation Systems Research

Tom Kelly – TK- Chief Sustainability Office – Lifetime member of TPC

Chris Van Horne –CV- Human Resources Communications and Events

Billy Kitchens – BK- Civil Engineering Student full-time – Commuter
More than 15 years since our Committee began a reinvigorated, 2 year focus that came up with set of policies and goals approved in 2003. Big picture, Policy framework adopted (slide 1)

2003 goals:
Implement policies which create an improved transportation system which:

- reduces inefficiencies and personal time lost
- expands transportation options
- enhances campus movement without penalty or inhibition
- enhances visitor and outside community member access and participation in the University
- reduces the negative impacts of our transportation system on the environment
- supports sustainable development patterns
- fosters a ‘sense of place and identity’ in the community and region

TK – the points above are not a random list – they are part of a systemic view called TDM – transportation demand management as part of a system based on access and mobility across multiple modes.

CV – Are we also considering pathways, sidewalks? Yes..all aspects of movement including bike and ped

SP – the specific recommendations below have been actively pursued and many implemented. Notably, parking permit price change strategies are impacted by AAUP agreements. Last three presidents have had a policy that whatever AAUP faculty pay, all staff and commuters would pay the same. That is now $75 pre-tax at our start it was $50 post-tax. Still a challenge for UNH to move toward realistic market pricing

2003 Recommendations:

- **significant increases in the prices of parking permits in the context of a **tiered system** that places a higher value on spaces located closer to the core campus while offering reduced cost, alternatives for those who choose not to bring cars to core campus**
- **a feasibility study for the construction of a multilevel parking facility** that would be integrated into and enhance system wide improvements consistent with TDM principles, providing for current needs and campus growth.
- **development of efficient and effective emergency ride, carpooling, and vanpooling**
- **significant investment to improve the frequency, dependability, and accessibility of the Campus Shuttle and Wildcat Transit**
- **review and tightening of parking permit eligibility requirements and assurance of intelligent, fair, and energetic enforcement**
- **aggressive efforts to increase the housing supply on or near campus** and to obtain the funding needed to complete the railroad underpasses and Loop Road
- **improvements to traffic flow on Main Street through investments in better traffic signals, intersection design, and manual traffic control.**

Parking study – feasibility studies have been done – 2004 Master Plan, 2012 Master Plan and most recent study to put a parking deck at Campus Crossing Visitor Lot. Studies are completed and have been
stable and the prices are consistent. Reality is that our revenue model does not facilitate us making those investments in the current system.

SM – What is the ballpark of structure cost?

SP – One level deck doubles the capacity – Cost per net added space is approximately $40,000. ($22k per space construction). That’s not significantly different from what we saw in previous studies in Lot A and Lot B – and also very much in line with recent lots in Dover, Portsmouth (new) and Newburyport.

That recent study also takes into consideration the use internal stackers to cut the cost down. We focused on this lot given the potential for shared public usage given a potential hotel etc.

**Develop Efficient and Effective….: (status)**

Emergency Ride – in place

Carpooling – exists in theory as a dedicated lot – lots of informal use across campus

Vanpooling – was not feasible in earlier attempts – might revisit after the demise of Rochester fixed route transit – as a cost-effective alternative if community requests

We have made **significant investments and improvements in our transit system** including improved vehicles, NextBus information systems, shelters, displays and service. Frequency and investment levels peaked two years ago and we have been making some reductions in service levels as ridership has fallen with migration of students into Durham (and subsequent out migration of students from Dover and Newmarket (especially). This is an active issue right now as we evaluate transit investments and redefining the system. In two recent listening systems we clearly heard that cuts to the Campus Connector system (especially) have resulted in unacceptably slow service….we are re-evaluating that and considering if further resources need to be redirected from Wildcat Transit to the Campus Connector system and/or whether routes need to be redesigned on the CC system

**Limiting Permit eligibility:**

-Freshman cannot have cars (traditional) maintained (some schools are freshman and sophomores)

-prohibit for students within ¼ mile to a campus Connector stop or 1 mile to core campus (implemented in past six years) in anticipation of Lodges and Cottages development. This was a very successful town-gown process with the support of the Durham Planning Board. It has worked. Should this restriction be extended/expanded to F/S?

**Increased Housing Supply on or near campus**

In first 10 years UNH did a marginal amount of increase per master plan recommendations. We never would have expected the scale of the last 5 years as the Town of Durham private housing added over 2,500 beds. Combined, these efforts have resulted in a major transformation of student residential location- pulling 20% more students into Durham from surrounding (and frequently Wildcat Transit)
communities – with subsequent impacts on transit ridership (down) and some reduced commuter permit sales.

Efforts to complete the ‘Loop Road’ and improve traffic on Main Street

- significant improvements to Main Street corridor (over $3M) of town-grown grant funded projects
- improvement to transit faculties
- Very little capacity enhancement possible along Main Street corridor
- ongoing repeated efforts to get grant funding for South Drive. Last year we used UNH funds to do a significant portion of the roadway. This is the highest transportation infrastructure priority for UNH and likely our biggest systematic transportation need (benefiting vehicle and transit) as well as expanding access to southwest quadrant

CH – What is update on South Drive?

-Last summer we built a significant portion with base or road to Stadium lot. We did submit several applications for final funding to complete the road to McDaniel. We have submitted 5-6 applications for funding with no success – we will keep doing that but at a certain point it becomes more practical to pursue completely with local funds as grant programs are not ideal for this type of project. It remains

We have also had two master plans (2004 and 2012) adopted since TPC – both of which were built upon the principles of the walking campus. We now anticipate that when a new president comes in she or he will most likely want us to consider another update of the master plan….so our timing is very germane to that process.

Focus Question Feedback: These are the questions I left in the email to you. Please give us true feedback.

1. How do current policies and practices...
   - reinforce institutional principles of sustainability and the walking campus?
   - respond to existing conditions and mobility needs?
   - position the campus and its community for future mobility and development needs?
   - accommodate visitors and prospective community members?

1. In which areas/services have we effectively met our goals?
2. In which transportation and mobility areas have we not met our 2003 goals or visions?

3. What realities/trends were not envisioned 15 years ago and call for policy adaption?
4. Which policies or practices should be re-tested and re-worked?

5. What data would you like to see prepared to inform new policy or practice?

6. Moving forward, what is the most important transportation policy issue is for UNH-Durham?
DT – one area we did not anticipate was all the beds and private student housing. This had a dramatic effect on our transit system – We had gotten to the point that we had hourly service to each of our key commuter towns. (Ports-Dover-Nmkt). Routes have now been declining for four years straight since arrival of housing. Newmarket has seen the steepest decline – to the point of our consideration of major cuts and or future termination of service. Newmarket has gentrified and students have moved to Dover and Durham. Graduate students have moved to Dover. This has had a big effect on us and has put a larger burden on Campus Connector.

SP - You can see that in past 5 years both Wildcat and Connector (in past year or two) have turned down. Big picture:

- good side to story is that many of those lost transit trips are people living in Durham walking as we have not seen a matched increase in commuter parking permits. Most of these transit riders are now Durham walkers....this speaks to a need for redesign and refocus

- we do bi-annual route productivity studies with a benchmark of 14 passengers/run.

- we are making difficult decisions about Newmarket as it becomes less and less a student town.

BUT

- car storage has become a much bigger problem. Many of these students that are now in Durham feel a need to bring a car to Durham and store it and use it on evenings and weekends.

- 50% of downtown and 100% of Durham remote residents downtown and have associated parking spaces. Cars want to be driven.

- also the mopeds (2003=0 and now 450)
SM - Enrollment has changed as well.

SP – Yes. Undergrad and Graduate enrollment is up 16% total over 15 years (1% annually) **2,000 more undergraduates**

Total headcount (F/S/Student) is up 12% total over 15 years (<1% year)

Parking permit totals are down 7% but that masks an almost 20% F/S permit increase and significant resident (and now some non-resident) car storage permit increases.....

CH – Does decrease in transit of Wildcat affect funding? Not directly. We do not get any operating funds. Students pay for transit via transportation fee. But, we have reduced transit service frequency over the past several years – which has reduced operating costs. We have a very aggressive biannual route productivity review to adjust service. WT has declined from almost hourly weekday service to 90 minutes at best

**CREATE TABLE. 2001-2010-2018***

MF - What is operational difference between Wildcat Transit and CC? WT goes out of Durham and Connector stays in Durham. CC is high frequency – some routes are as frequent as every 20 minutes.

Gables – 20 minute; West Edge – 30 Minute; Cottages – 30 Minute

These frequencies are simply inadequate to affect changes in behavior or lure any discretionary riders. It would need to be twice that.
TK - With the housing increase in Durham the stress on Connector has grown.

SP – Explained parking permit graphic overview below. Total commuter flat to down; F/S trending up.

DT – Issue now is strong storage pressure....

Create graph of car storage demand/space assignment specifically**

SP – student permit parking permit prices are close to market price – but still lagging. We know that private spaces in Durham are $800-$1,000 per year while UNH is $375 max.

JL – Looking forward do not plan on the same trend line of private bed increases. Zoning in Durham has been changed and no longer permits multi-unit apartments. The zoning downtown has changed in terms of density. Mill Plaza (in front of planning board) they were grandfathered under previous zoning. In the future you are going to see more small in-fill developments and renovations. Nothing on the order of what you have seen the last 5 years. The new Town Master Plan reflects that change....

DT – Rivers Edge and the Cottages (not Lodges) are now renting to some non-student (young professionals). If that continues, ridership on Campus Connector might not be tied directly to residency there. JL – we hear that every year. Cottages are owned by a publication corporation (Capstone) - they list properties and occupancy in public filings (10k) They listed a 90.7% occupancy and revenue per bed was increasing in a range where most young professionals were not going to pay those student rates....so sometimes what we hear differs when we get concrete data.
Dialog Session

MF- Given campus stays about the same do we have enough parking spaces? In general?

DT - If campus stays the way it is, the answer is yes. Right now we have enough for special events on top of general. Because we did not fill remote parking lots we had opened them up to non-resident students ($500/year)...those are discretionary and we can take them back to be used for UNH need. For quite awhile we have enough parking if it is actively amanged. Note: We also now lease additional underutilized spaces at 121 Technology Drive which can be used (with transit service) for major events.

SP – Mike, how would you define adequate parking? MF - Someone could drive on campus at any time and find a space. Where? Immediate? That would be a preference. Is it possible to have the campus landscape we have now and do that? No. My sense is that we only have a couple lots available to house major events.

Do we do that well now?

JL – We are only ‘adequate’ at that at this point – not exemplary

NM – We are adequate because we have been doing it long enough to know ins and outs

Visitors....We have enough for F/S and commuters – but we see over 10k visitors come annually just for tours. For big events such big events we make that work. We arrange schedules/shave peak demand.

With a carrot or stick we manage our spaces and peak events

JL - Daily visitors for tours.....we have challenges....most days are covered but we have 3 tours/day in the summer and February vacation weeks – last two weeks where we had high visitor numbers. We increased the numbers of activities on campus (visiting academic info sessions, shadowing students, prospective student day happened to coincide with same day music. It creates a bad first experience for visitors to be shuffling from lot to lot ...... Used to have person in the booth – that has been lost and it creates a mess.

Visitor experience is not ideal. Visitors should not get a ticket as a first experience at UNH. They should not have to submit a ticket to refunded. They get Town tickets for parking at Town spaces – which we can do nothing about.

The more we offer because our perspective students are savvy shoppers and the demographics across NE NY NJ is declining so we have to be more complete and the visit experience is going to be #1 in determine whether they enroll on campus. Improved wayfinding is important. Experience when you get to lots. We are adequate - Campus is beautiful.

NM - Concur with challenges of visitors trying to find parking spaces.

SM – We are doing more campus events – everyone...athletics, admissions, programs. Campus is more utilized more times of the years. Stadium is twice as big. Is there enough parking for all those visitors? No. Definitely not if we are trying to give them a good experience when they come to core campus
Can we GRAPH Out actual ‘Visitor’ Event # change from 2003-2018 with any accuracy?

NM – Does the AAUP contract have parameters regarding parking location? Yes. There is an addendum which specifies core parking boundary (east of tracks plus peripheral) . Some core lots require Presidential approval and AAUP communication. Parking permit price is always a negotiated issue. It competes with other negotiations. Up to leadership where this issue falls in negotiation priority list

COMBINED SCHEDULE IMPORTANCE!

NM – Would actually advocate for closing lots more often for campus visits. This would force F/S and commuters into remote lots. This would force an experience of riding the shuttle.

SP – How many people (in room) have ridden on CC and WT? (less than 1/3). Do F/S and students know how to use the system?

CH – They vaguely know but many have not had experience. (ie a West Edge parking day) You would find that newer employees use it more than older employees. Most employees have never been asked to use it/

JV – was a commuter last year (lived in NMKT) had a car and drove here. Found on many days that Lot A was full by 9am. When parking in West Edge the service was such that he was late to class? Bus stop was a good walk away on NH 108 – not a safe road to walk on.

SP – If parking is limited in the short-term due to resources what should priority be?

Improve accommodation of visitors? (even with commuter impact) Consensus of Yes.

CAMPUS CONNECTOR SERVICE FAILURES: Frequency, Overcrowding, Routing

CREATE HISTORIC FREQUENCY/SEATING ETC/TRAVEL TIME ON MAIN ST

BK – From commuter point of view, the commuters are not going to take the bus because they can’t get on the overcrowded bus!. So full they can’t get on. Overcrowding issues is very significant and the biggest complaint about parking further away is having to wait 30 minutes for the bus…. That is not acceptable. 10 minute ride would be great – it becomes a 20-40 minute. SP – We heard this strongly at our last TPC meeting. We heard that our CC system had degraded – more traffic on Main Street, driver shortages. We came away with a very clear message that we need to do something about this – it is fundamental to our success.

DT- Service issues were the West Edge. Gables is an overcrowding issue. (but essentially both are resolved by frequency increases). We do not have enough drivers….used to have 4 Gables buses and we are currently operating 3. We have a 3 year major shortage of drivers. That is similar to Dining which has also had a shortage. UTS is highest paid on campus but the background check and wait
CVH – Shocked with 30 minute runs to West Edge…. Used to be 10 minute frequency. Until we deal with traffic (ie South Drive) There have been times when it is faster to go US 4 and go around than going down Main St

JL2 - Wayfinding Town supports the improvements UNH is making. What’s missing from the visitor experience is wayfinding improvement out in the community - that is going to happen with a Durham-UNH collaboration. In-Community (off-campus) coordinated signage is required to reduce unnecessary traffic (hunting, confusion)

JL1 - When we have big events – we try to get everyone to exit (and enter) via NH 155. Problem with use of GPS which drops people in the desired spot. Ultimately, the campus is going to have to close Main Street….reduce traffic running through campus. We have to eliminate the amount of traffic that runs through campus...

JL2  **We are not going to close Main Street** – it is a public road.

Would be profoundly disappointed if UNH sizes parking to meet surge events. Manage for the surge don’t build for the surge. Concerned too with discussions of expanding parking – which 300 days of the year will be empty. Concerned that some constituencies feel we should build t

**DT = One of the 2003 goals was Scheduling.** We seem to have lost some momentum on that. Was the spreading the class schedule – the academic week – this has not been fully accomplished. We still need to smooth out peaks and push classes to underutilized times

**Can David Clark provide a graphic of this (today v 2003)**

NM – New role as campus scheduling administrator deploying software to integrate campus wide all space scheduling for special events, outdoor events, classes and we are missing right now is space asset management – system will allow clearer view of that demand profile. System will also look at better visitor parking management including weekends

SP – This year we have started charging in Visitor lots on weekdays until 9pm and on weekends all day. (new). **Looking big picture it is likely that the trend of regulating/charging for parking for more lots for more hours of the week is going to grow.**

NM – This system will track demand /need for off-campus arrivals

SP – How does the group about UNH increasing regulated parking hours macro?

SM – Would have a big effect...

NM – Would probably continue to encourage non-core lot use

SP – maybe it would be done in a way that Lot A was different. Should parking be free for visitors/guests?

SM – Would not be in favor of changing lots from way we do it now.
SM – ‘Loop Road’ – Preferred term South and North Drive. Even if South Drive gets done I think it is game changer – because that will reduce traffic down Main Street. South Drive should remain a priority – for traffic reduction, transit service – it really starts to change where they park and how they get where they are going. Reduces idling and improves air quality

SP – We have updated a traffic model for downtown and campus core that allows us to evaluate the impacts on the full network on both traffic and emissions.

MF – One of the issues is communication. How do you communicate where spaces are available to our students/faculty and visitors. What is the technology. Sensors? Satellites – Once you have the data how do you communicate it? What vector? Dynamic signage, broadcast information.

DT - We are looking at proposals to feed parking into public data feeds (similar to NextBus)

SP – we have $75 all you can eat parking permit. How do we pay for these great new things that we want? On the student pay a transportation fee of $142./year which pays for the transit system. How do we generate revenue to pay for all these parking system (information) enhancements we are looking at.

Just vanilla operational cost/spaces is $200/year and we generate $75/permit

JL - California example of offering free parking for visitors. Nobody goes anywhere anymore and expects a free parking space. If you are coming for event you expect to pay. The retail (free) model of parking is dead. If visitors paid $2 for 5 hours in a lot – you would be generating some revenue. Many event attendees pay at meters.

**We should be charging visitors for all events** (directly or embedded through sponsors TDM would say charge only those that need to reduce demand)

The TPC should figure out social engineering. If you want people to go do other things than create the policies/practices etc that forces us to do what you want us to do. That’s what tiered pricing was supposed to do

MF – that is dangerous place to go – when you start limiting people’s location choices it is a dangerous thing. They are our core constituency. They are our primary customer. To tell them that you can’t park in certain places etc you will have quite a bit of outcry.

JL – In 4.5 years I have only had to park in Lot A one time. People who want to park at Smith Hall get here really early need to get here to do that

NM – Question of perceived inconvenience versus reality.

SP – 15 years ago concept of ‘park-once’ campus. This is not a shopping mall. You should have an expectation that you will need to walk 5-10 minutes from your parking place to site. We are seeing more and more intra-campus private vehicle use which is growing problem. Is park once with an x minute still the reasonable framework that we instill on our campus?

**MF – Are our permits lot specific? No they are lot. Should we look at this?**
Group was skeptical

SP - When it comes time for negotiation of next AAUP should it be a very high priority to revisit this?
Definitely go there. Absolutely have to given comparators

DT – Last time we looked at comparators (5 years ago) we were at $50 we were way below the mark:
$198 F/S
$189 Commuter
$325 Resident

SP – would this affect our recruiting effort?
CH No

SP - Should the incoming President reevaluate the commitment that staff/commuter students pay the same as Faculty?

JL – Issue should not include students.

CH – it would be very hard to do this from a morale perspective etc

JL – If you could explain the cost benefit of increased renewed (in terms of service levels) then
Kyle – More important than a direct benefit it needs to be tied to a core part of the Master Plan of the University. A new president is not going to pick a fight with new faculty unless it is an obstacle to a major campus goal….ie something way more important. Must be clearly connected to big picture goal that is worth the strain of changing things. Parking is so cheap here (speaking for himself not representing union). He is new here and it is amazingly inexpensive – but it is perceived as a benefit.

SP – One of the things that had been talked about is a ‘cash-out’. One time cash payment to take the permit out of the contract.

MF – Need to look at this holistically. Health care costs etc are increasing. Where does it fit in the overall benefits package? There are grants available to help fund this. (Like NSF grant to measure pedestrian traffic)

Kyle – TDM references to Colorado. They did a lot of projects that received federal funding to build underpasses etc. These investments a have changed what they can provide in their transportation system.
TK – The fact remains that we are subsidizing parking to a huge amount of money. Is that one of our core values? There are things we cannot do because we are doing that. We are way out of line. There must be a reasonable distance to go that could really create a lot more revenue and still be reasonable for people.

SP - We have to subsidize everyone that comes here – all modes – walkers, train riders etc. We are subsidizing everyone that comes on this campus – as does every business or every public entity. This is one of the issues we recirculate. Where are we applying that subsidy – where is it going to improve

UNH best for branding

Lightening Round – One final point from each member

Amy

1) Electric Car Charging Infrastructure. Look at what Alex Ray did at rest stops on I-93.

2) Agree that we are subsidizing parking way too much. I could walk to campus. If I could save $500 I would walk but at $75 I buy the permit (ie no disincentive to not drive). Right pricing would encourage carpooling and unnecessary driving

Chris

Parking should be conceptualized as a privilege –not an entitlement. When I cam here it was $32. Increase to $50 created angst. I came from DC. This was insane. When I do new hires – most of them say, “It’s that cheap are you kidding”. New hires think we are crazy. This is not going to be a recruitment issue. We need to tie the privilege into our culture and our values regarding what is important. Get back to the concept of paying for the privilege to park once – Healthy UNH means get off your tush and walk./see other parts of campus/engage/ ride shuttle and use the New people get told to not get sucked into vortex – walk, use Connector, learn about who and what we are and interact with students and you will be more inclined to engage in our community

KK

As a new hire faculty I think would help to explicitly tie our actions to larger campus goals. Nobody cares about transportation policy. They care about the thing it serves. Education is important – not just communication. The Why piece has to be communicated – and this reaches into our sustainability goals.

SM

Build South Drive. Charge more for parking

JV

1) Wanted to bring up safety. In speaking with student peers big thing that comes up is lighting of crosswalks. Very concerned/cautious that you need to slow down at every crosswalk.
2) Mast Road has become less accessible with decline of Mast Road bus – It should be restored or restored in some new version

Amy

1) Some sort of campaign to bring up safety awareness/texting at crosswalks (Note we have material developed with police in 2003. Safety is not really the first focus of TPC)

NM

1) Sidewalk up to MUB
2) Support the idea of raising permit costs. Buy out concept might help us get over the hump
3) Is there a benefit if you raise the permits to a tiered model based on location and income – put it in with open enrollment choice (tied to infrastructure benefit)

CH

4) Sidewalk on Strafford Ave (town)

JL

1) Active seniors are attracted to university towns. Non-traditional students are in important constituency. What does this mean for transportation needs
2) The Town has really seen positive results from collaboration and support of University projects. That’s because there is shared vision and shared values. Want to thank UNH for that but looking forward hope that we can continue and build on that. Amount of changes that we have seen in last 10 years have been great

Billy

1) If you are going to increase fees for commuters you are going to need to increase your customer services standards for commuters. Challenge you all to see how many people cant get on the bus at 7:30 from Parking and Transit Center.
2) Crossings at Lot A and commuter center (Gables Way) dangerous
3) The Commuter lots are the only places that don’t have bus stop shelter. They need them! They should have recycle and trash cans.
4) Wouldn’t have problem paying higher fee if the standards were there. [these are our most time sensitive constituents]
5) South Drive is important for transit access. Does everything need to circle campus the way it does? Re-evaluate.

SP – Do buses need to circulate around campus?

Only Gables circle around - should they?

Wildcats?
Consider winter weather issues!

JL - John

1) We don’t need more lakes of asphalt.
2) Visitors- would love to have a physical address for your parking lots….all lots...to assist visitors
3) If we charge visitors a reasonable price for a committed space that is fine.
4) Charge tailgators and athletic events and have that charge to go to Transportation

Mike – Learned a lot today regarding complexities and constituencies. Not an easy solution. Conversations helps develop a holistic approach. Looking at it year to year is not successful. We need to think about it strategically with a longterm plan based on populations and trends (Visitors, on-campus population). Think about it from a global perspective regarding customer service. Students cannot be late for class. Communication improvements will benefit. (technologies)

Chris

Come up with a structured multi-year rate increase in advance. This would also assist us with improvement planning.

Dirk

2003 – the bus system was broken. We made great changes/strides and grew transit to largest. Now we see that it is falling apart on us. We did not keep up with projection regarding traffic at lights etc.

We need to come back together to make the shuttle system great again.

Ended 3:35
Focus Group 2 – March 29, 2018 – MUB 207

Josh Quimby, Dirk Timmons

frequent NMKT WT rider but also takes classes at UNHM.

More challenges getting parking there – 2 occasions when parking garage (Radisson overflow) was full (due to events) and he had to park at 400 Commercial – feeding the meter – and was late for class. Got advance notice email blast that Radisson was going to be full etc. Will there ever be transit connection? (ie Bold step represented by CC). He is aware of cost issue and infeasibility...

(Dirk explained our past research, pricing models and admissions conversations regarding cross-class demand, timing etc)

SP – What would be a reasonable price (WTP) per trip from Durham to UNHM?

JQ - $10-$20 RT – as a student that works full time…. SP – we were looking at some way that Unh could subsidize it to get it to a $10-15RT pricepoint..and/or looking at Zipcar

He occasionally uses Lyft – mainly when using rail connection?

SP – have you used any web-based carpooling to UNHM. No…uses own car. He knows of some promoted through UTS in past but did not use.

JQ – Interline Connection (does bus get to campus right before classs/at end). Also for people connecting tiwh COAST and Greyhound. Are we aware that people are trying to catch C&J Trolley to get to Pease terminal etc? SP – tell us how you think we are doing on this? He has always found it perplexing because the classs ends at 5 and three is no bus at 5:05. As an employee schedule is more flexible and boss is understanding so he makes the. DT – we try to match all the competing needs including transit partners – but very challenging given time of year schedule change. etc

What is a reasonable wait time? – 15 minutes

JQ – Train Station – knows of grant to expand platform which he thinks is excellent. He frequently takes train from Durham or Exeter. Likes Durham given waiting room in winter but Durham makes him frustrated with the fact that there is no available bathroom. (with expansion we will rectify that problem). DB is only open for 5 out of 10 trains/day at this point. It would be gravy to get a cup of coffee but bathroom is more than sufficient. Exeter is busiest station and still has not developed shelter/necessary parking etc. He goes there by walking to the station to somewhere else (on the weekend).

SP – what is more important?
connecting with C&J? JQ prefers to take the train - but he knows some people want to go to Logan and seem unaware of the Woburn connection?

JQ – members of the public do not know which stop to get off at in Durham when going from Newmarket to Portsmouth

Connecting with Greyhound? – JQ -only used once – because the train was not running – runs only 2RT/day.

JQ – these are very small percentage of travelers willing to do this.

SP – you seek these things out. What do you think the average person’s knowledge of services/connections?

JQ – extremely low. Most people are willing to do only one mode and that’s it

SP – Where are we at our weakest in terms of marketing/education. What would we focus on?

JQ – Market the best way to avoid parking headache!

DT – Video being produced = Let’s get this on webpage

JQ – Connector. Has UNH M permit so he can park in Lot A…. Concerned that the Connector going to Gables….comes to UTS where the bus is frequently too full to board. DT – We have got to solve this problem – The Connector is not working well enough – esp Gables capacity and West Edge lot frequency and capacity. We likely need to increase bus capacity during morning peak hours. 4th Gables bus should just do Lot A and similar on West Edge - 3rd bus just doing West Edge (not CSDC) have been experimenting with changes since March 1. This has been the most frequent input at all meetings…..Campus Connector capacity/frequency must be improved – it has been degraded in past two years with service cuts (WT savings have not been reinvested).

JQ – NextBus system from Newmarket works well – but on the Connector – especially reduced and weekend they system can often be flawed…and frustrating. Overall, the most recent NextBus has been a huge detriment – removing being able to bookmark stops. The UNH interface has lost usability. SP - might be better to use NextBus app directly. We need to look into why do we have the UNH shell????
JQ – when he goes out of Durham he uses other app – Transit App. Can we get into that? The average visitor is more likely to use this and NextBUs and not the UNH shell. What has changed recently in UNH app that might have lost bookmarking etc

SP 95% of the time it’s excellent. 5% of the time it gets screwed up. We’ve lost one of our specialists on this – so we have an internal weakness here. DT – detours really mess up the system....also, when there is a breakdown, etc results in human error – not system problems.

JQ – Survey Center IOL – No connector service on Madbury. Would like to see service that goes down Madbury-Garrison (similar to old Mast Road shuttle). Circle campus??? Look into this NEW ROUTE OPTION FOR 2018-2019. Connect at Woodman with WT and then do the CIRCLE AROUND CAMPUS OR GABLES? Why does Gables circle back side of campus?

We have eliminated Woodsides and Mast Road routes ....

Big picture questions:

- What if we abandoned the circling of campus and just did Main Street and Pettee/or Madbury/Garrison? JQ – not many students would have issues Refer to JUNE PLANNING SESSION

JQ: Reduced service connector should service Lot A and Parking & Transit Office!

JQ: How to get buses through traffic on Main Street? SOUTH DRIVE...

JQ: Signal Prioritization? This would not work given single signal and constant density of buses

JQ: Is traffic helping to reduce cars coming to campus? DT increase of beds in immediate area have reduced WT ridership and now we are dealing with car storage and recreational traffic (or storage thru-town etc traffic) SP – self calibrating aspects of our system (unfortunately, it impacts our transit system negatively)

DT – meter feeding and intra-campus car trips are increasing – We need to keep working on this – for most people price and convenience does impact

SP – A few other friction factor questions. What do you think we could do that might impact discretionary car use (intra-Durham trips)?

- JQ – People who have transit available to them should pay more for parking
IF UNH can not increase funding through central budgeting or fees then we should consider a charge to ride the bus (realistic charge)

JQ – charge F/S to ride the bus? Yes…..less than general public….$50 for monthly pass for general public…..sticker on ID etc. maybe people will use it to compensate for costs

TALK TO DIRK ABOUT SUBSIDY/TAX ISSUE…..THE TRANSIT SUBSIDY IS MINIMAL COMPARED TO THE NET PARKING SUBSIDY….THINK ABOUT BUSINESS THAT PROVIDED FREE PARKING – SOMETHING IS OFF-TRACK IN THAT DISCUSSION

Quality of buses/service is for the most part excellent. Drivers are friendly and willing to help with connections etc. No complaints – but as a tall person a little more leg room wold be great 😊

Train questions
1) UNH pays about .25-.30c every time someone gets on-off train….What would you think if Maine (which pays for the service) were to have some trains skip Durham-UNH? JQ – would be disappointing/would make parking worse in Exeter – not a good idea.

2) How do you connect between N-S station: walks, sometimes takes the T. Likes to get on Amtrak at South station for better seating and nicer station

what are your feelings about what transportation practices UNH should and should not demonstrate best practices?

JQ_)-lot of enthusiasm right now behind electrics and if there was an electric bus that would be of benefit/generate attention and conversation. Worth it because they advance that conversation and discuss emissions, climate change, power sources, CO2 emissions etc.

Do you notice CNG v B20 when the bus comes into Newmarket?

JQ) Yes… a little bit – hard to miss the top of the bus(tanks). I think that it’s worth reminding the community about what that means. (SP – moving forward we are only buying CNG vehicles) The EcoCat logo is pretty iconic…but the fuel subcomponent needs to be re-explained – especially compare to a COAST bus which runs B10..

SP) We discussed the fact that F/S should pay something into transit. The Union contract is an obstacle – but it is one that every few years the University should choose to tackle (lecturers as well). Should UNH prioritize this in negotiations or not or consider ‘cash-out’ concept.
JQ) Yes... Look at cash-out. I think the students would agree

SP) We manage over 7,000 parking spaces right now. Increasingly the challenge is demands in Durham for car storage – not commuter. Commuter is still down from peak 5 or 6 years ago – especially with all the new beds. We know that we are behind market rate – let alone our comparators for car storage. Should we be aggressively trying to move our car storage parking prices higher? (residential and in-durham non university housing) Should we be aggressively moving to market price or is that not right – ie make life difficult for students

JQ) Was used to the Freshman prohibition. Survived that. Had a friend that paid the resident west permit fee. That was 10 years ago – and fee has only gone up $25 since then. Yes. I think we should move this to more market

SP) Should sophomores be allowed to have cars? (years ago they were not....DST pushed for change because he was getting beat up so badly from parents because they depended on their children to be working after sophomore year. In the year it came to TPC it was a unanimous vote to allow. He could see it as a parent that they needed this for financial reasons. (but there are tons of jobs available on campus that go unfilled!) We tried the experiment of having to show need – but everyone would come in with an exception of some sorts

JQ) Probably not. Unless you get that lot back from DOT? This should be considered. Is there a shortage of employment on campus??? Is offering the West Edge permits to non-residents a new thing? Yes...2 years – but we charge $600. Only 75 this year. I guess we should not be doing this if there are days when west edge is full for commuters etc!

DT) Maybe we should return to restriction to fill employment on campus? Revisit? Many campuses its Fresh and sophomore.. Moving the testing site to Goss – we would love to do this but Facilities is not in favor of this given lease terms and lot conditions (Please revisit this with Bill Janelle)

Please compare comparator analysis on this issue for TPC Review. (Fresh + sophomore restriction)

JQ) Final point – he learned recently that there is a 60 hour storage rule for commuter lots?

DT) We just implemented that to protect commuters (hour # was a first stab) this was due to misuse at Gables is making it impossible for a ‘true’ commuter that needs the lot for a field trip
etc?  UTS finally worded it to the rule that was kind of already informal.  Maybe we should make it even less?

JQ) as someone who will park in section 4 to take the train it was news to me.  Why are commuter permit holders limited to this?

DT) Challenge to do something to stop guests of Gables residents from.  We write a ticket if we see overstays.  Appeals?  Need to implement a prior notice process?? Just went into effect this September. Just Lot A?? It’s Commuter Lot?  -Mainly went in effect for Section 4 of Lot A...

This policy was never discussed at TPC – Needs a closer review to implications/intention.  Maybe section 4 should be included.  Needs a simpler logical framework that is noticed to the community.  Feedback????

DT) We are working through some other enforcement challenges – relating to staffing.  We are cleaning those up.  Maybe there are better ways to fix what we need and eliminate the 60 hour rule.  Maybe this can be limited to semesters?  Complicated

DT) Parking eligibility restriction is 1 mile or ¼ mile of a transit stop (for students) Faculty/staff are exempt.  There are a lot of faculty in faculty neighborhood that drive- not walk.  This would be a conversation with AAUP etc to extend to Faculty (and therefore staff).

JQ) not sure that distance is enough

SP) Safety issues regarding walking infrastructure/winter maintenance etc

END
Addendum – Newmarket Transit

DT – we are not cutting any weekday service. Regarding weekend, we need to come up with opinion regarding weekend as well as the Cherry Hill service issue.

SP If ridership does not improve do you think UNH has a commitment to retain service or is there some point at which you say NMKT has changed and we give 12-18 months prior to an end of service?

JQ – I would say that NMKT is currently funding COAST route 7 - $100k - maybe there is a conversation to be had with Town Administrator regarding re-use of those funds. Would like to see during academic semesters but understand if weekend and reduced go away. I notice that the buses are not full. We’re lucky if we get to the 14 number.

SP Do you think this has to do with NH 108 construction?

JQ There are no undergrads in NMKT anymore. One year notice minimum is required...due to leases etc

We need to pull fall 2017 commuter permit residence list to compare/see historic trends

DT We have been talking about Cherry Hill service cuts for almost 2 years...so this is not news. We still find it hard to believe that so few come from there – going way back....All those apartments from day 1.....biggest complex around. No idea why we never have decent ridership from there – the owners tell us that they are all headed to Boston or Portsmouth/Pease. Very few are UNH affiliated.