



A REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT ON

# Transportation Solutions



Presented by  
The University of Texas at Austin Staff Council  
May 19, 2011

Approved by The University of Texas at Austin Staff Council  
and sent forward to the President

by a vote of 41 to 0

on April 21, 2011.

Prepared by The University of Texas at Austin Staff Council  
Ad Hoc Committee on Transportation Solutions

Louise Nelson, Chair  
Gary Thomas, Vice Chair

Jamie Bandy, Anna Borne, Lynne Chapman, Emily Cicchini,  
Jose De Haro, Jeff Ellinger, Robert Giles, Rebecca Kindschi,  
Jimmy Moore, Jr., Sara Ricke, Dana Taylor

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Recommendation #1: Establish an Institutional Transportation Advisory Committee ...</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Recommendation #2: Promote Existing Transportation Options .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Sponsor a Transportation Fair.....	4
Enhance Distribution of Bus Maps and Schedules.....	5
Target Users for Transportation Information by Area .....	5
Sponsor a Ride the Train and Bus to Work Event (Including the President) .....	5
<b>Recommendation #3: Revisit A Permit Management .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Transportation Opportunity #1: Align Capitol Metro/UT Shuttle Bus Routes for Optimum Service .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Capital Metro Alignments.....	7
UT Shuttle Routes .....	7
<b>Transportation Opportunity #2: Increase Remote Parking Options .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Appendix A: Capital Metro Flyer .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendix B: Staff Council Resolution 2011-01 .....</b>	<b>12</b>

## Executive Summary

**Purpose:** In harmony with the Campus Master Plan, the UT Austin Staff Council Transportation Solutions Committee will research and propose options related to commuting, parking and intra/inter-campus mobility, with the goal of improving campus access for the entire University of Texas at Austin community.

As a land-bound campus in a rapidly-growing urban area, with a combined daily commuter population of 70,000 students, faculty, staff and visitors to accommodate, the University of Texas at Austin faces enormous pressures on both its parking and its transportation infrastructures. These challenges are magnified by the current financial state of the University, in which the cost of transportation improvements must be weighed against higher-priority uses for a diminishing pool of funds.

However, since most staff members live far enough from campus that they must rely on some form of transportation to get to and from their work locations, issues surrounding parking and transportation affect staff on a daily basis. In addition, because the self-funded model for Parking and Transportation Services means that any improvements to parking infrastructure must be paid for by increased revenues, staff members are acutely aware of annual price increases for permits, especially during years without accompanying salary increases.

The problem of parking on campus is one of supply and demand. The UT Austin Staff Council would like to see both sides of this equation addressed. We are particularly interested in helping to identify and develop alternatives to reduce the demand side of the parking equation.

We have crafted three specific recommendations in the area of Transportation Solutions. In addition, we have identified two transportation opportunities for consideration.

1. Establish an Institutional Transportation Advisory Committee to address the University's long-term strategic priorities for campus mobility.
2. Promote the University's existing transportation options
3. Revisit A Permit Management
4. Transportation opportunities: ideas and suggestions for further investigation regarding getting to, from, and around campus.

## **Recommendation #1: Establish an Institutional Transportation Advisory Committee**

There are multiple methods for getting to, from, and around the UT Austin campus, and decisions made about transportation have an impact on many facets of University operations. However, the existing groups organized to address these issues look at specific aspects of the topic instead of looking at campus transportation in its entirety. This siloing of interests results in transportation policies and practices that do not necessarily take into account the strategic interests of the University as a whole.

- **Faculty Council Parking and Traffic Policies Committee.** Composed of faculty, staff, and student representatives, with non-voting members from Physical Plant, the Dean of Students, Employee and Campus Services, Parking and Transportation, and the University Police, this group addresses the specific topics of parking permit availability and regulations, as well as bicycle-related issues. However, it does not presently address more overarching issues related to campus transportation, including public transportation.
- **Student Government Student Shuttle Committee.** This group exists to provide student input on the routes and services provided by the shuttle system. Voting membership on this committee is restricted to students because the shuttle system is funded through student fees.
- **Parking and Transportation Services.** This department provides management and operational expertise in support of the University's transportation infrastructure. PTS also negotiates with Capital Metro on behalf of the University. As an auxiliary unit, however, PTS must fund its activities through the fees that it charges for its services. This results in an emphasis on activities that generate revenues and cover expenses.

What the UT Austin Staff Council sees as missing from these groups is a big-picture focus on what the University's future transportation and infrastructure picture could or should look like.

For instance, consider the opportunities of expanded teleworking: the University could simultaneously reduce its need for costly administrative office space, reduce demand for parking during peak periods, and reduce its carbon inventory. However, to achieve these results would require coordinated effort from Human Resource Services, Parking and Transportation Services, Campus Planning & Facilities Management, Information Technology Services, and the Office of Sustainability.

To facilitate identifying opportunities and quantifying the costs and benefits of various transportation possibilities such as this, the UT Austin Staff Council recommends formation of a University-wide Transportation Advisory Committee. The mission of this group would be:

- 1) To bring together students, faculty, staff, and executive stakeholders to examine campus transportation issues at a macro level and make recommendations to University leadership about policies and practices to pursue.
- 2) To identify external partners, such as other institutions of higher education, local school districts, or local employers, that the University might join forces with to achieve mutually beneficial parking and transportation objectives.
- 3) To investigate and propose funding mechanisms, including grants and partnerships, for the initiatives identified.
- 4) To provide University representation on regional transportation planning committees.

This committee would not supplant the existing organizations on campus, but would instead serve as an incubator for ideas to address long-term institutional needs.

Other topics this group could address include:

- The financial impacts of proposed transportation initiatives, including the paradox inherent in funding alternative transportation efforts - which if broadly adopted would reduce demand for parking permits - through monies generated by the sale of those permits.
- Identifying and overcoming barriers to including garage space in new construction projects located in the core campus. This should include exploring whether these barriers are physical, aesthetic, financial, or legislative.

No new funding would be required to bring together this group, but participation would take a commitment of time of approximately 2% of annual effort per staff or faculty representative appointed, plus time from departments engaged as subject matter experts on particular topics. We believe this is a minimal investment to make to address a large problem at a time of limited resources.

## **Recommendation #2: Promote Existing Transportation Options**

While our first recommendation takes a long-range view of the University's transportation needs, in the short term there needs to be better promotion of the many fine programs that already exist. In particular, the *UT Share* program created by Parking and Transportation Services offers excellent resources to encourage use of alternative transportation options, but many members of the community are not aware this resource exists.

With the price of gasoline again on the rise, this is an ideal time to launch a coordinated marketing campaign to make everyone on campus aware of the many alternatives they might have.

### **Sponsor a Transportation Fair**

We envision a large scale, well-themed, campus-wide promotional and public relations campaign to encourage car and van pools, cycling, and riding the bus/train. This will help the entire campus community better understand the options already available for parking and transportation, including:

- All available passes and waiting list procedures
- Van Pool Program
- Share Pass Costs and Discounts
- Zip Car Service
- Changes to Capitol Metro Services

This campaign would begin with a day-long Transportation Fair in the new Student Activities Center. At this event, scheduled for the beginning of the fall academic term, we foresee offering services such as bike registration and helmet sales; carpool and vanpool participant matchmaking; Zip Car sign up and demonstrations; and a shuttle to take people to the new MetroRail station for a free ride on the train. We would also like to see the annual PTS Bike Auction brought to this location instead of being held on top of one of the parking garages after working hours.

During the Transportation Fair, representatives from PTS, Capitol Metro, the Orange Bike Project, and Zip Car would serve on an hour-long discussion panel to answer questions. We would also like the panel to include faculty, staff, and students who use these services and can talk about their experiences and give advice.

The UT Austin Staff Council would be willing to sponsor this event along with Parking and Transportation and other stakeholders. The costs to hold this event would be minimal, largely involving staff time to coordinate the activities.

## **Enhance Distribution of Bus Maps and Schedules**

Capital Metro regularly produces printed bus route maps and schedules, which are available on campus in various locations where students congregate. However, this information is not always available at the bus stops where it would be most useful.

Recently, however, Capital Metro has begun piloting the use of Quick Response (QR) codes at bus stops. These QR codes enable people with camera-enabled smart phones to scan the code and receive information about scheduled arrival times and other information of interest. We would like to see Capital Metro equip every stop on the UT Campus with QR codes, and encourage them to provide route maps as part of their QR code information.

Additionally, we appreciated Capital Metro's recent release of a targeted flyer (originally developed by UT Austin Staff Council representative Robert Giles) for UT employees at the Pickle Research Center, showing the route and schedule of the MetroRail connector bus that serves PRC. As other services are identified that particularly benefit the UT Austin community, we would like to see similarly targeted communication pieces created.

## **Target Users for Transportation Information by Area**

Parking and Transportation Services should partner with Human Resource Services to target employees according to where they live, sending targeted e-mail and print messages directly to small geographically related employee groups. This is a short-term project (40-60 hours total) that could be taken on by an existing employee, and once the reporting infrastructure is established, it could be repeated in future years.

## **Sponsor a Ride the Train and Bus to Work Event (Including the President)**

One barrier to using public transportation that we identified during our research was a negative perception about using it. We request that the University sponsor an annual "Ride the Train or Bus to Work Day," encouraging all employees, including top-level executives from University leadership, to use public transportation or the campus shuttle service. Through leading by example, our campus leaders could do much to change the general resistance to using public transportation. It would be good to see the President's Office and Parking and Transportation Services working together in this way; perhaps Capitol Metro would consider sponsoring the effort with cash or in-kind marketing value (bus wrappers, print in-bus advertisements, website promotion) for its value beyond the UT community.

### **Recommendation #3: Revisit A Permit Management**

We believe that there is a key pressure point for staff regarding A parking permits on campus. These permits, long nicknamed “hunting licenses,” are sold to part-time and evening-shift workers as well as to full-time employees. In Academic Year 2008-09, 4626 A permits were sold against an inventory of 1041 spaces,<sup>1</sup> meaning only 22.5% of the A permit population can park at one time. The rationale for overselling these passes is that the A permit holder population does not generally need to be on campus all at once, but for full-time employees unfortunate enough to arrive past 8:30 in the morning, the only option for parking is often paying the daily rate in a campus garage.

It seems unjust to sell the A permit so far beyond its capacity. We believe that with the continued elimination of A spaces on the inner campus, it is time for Parking and Transportation to review the model for these passes, to consider offering A passes with a preference to full-time employees, and to make the sale of these passes to full-time staff more proportional with the available A space inventory.

Another alternative would be to provide all full-time A permit holders with a UT Share Pass preloaded with credit for up to 4 garage uses per year. This would allow employees who must occasionally arrive late, or leave and return mid-day, to park without having to circle around fruitlessly in search of an available spot.

While we understand that there are complex formulas that must be maintained for Parking and Transportation to cover its operational costs, the A pass is one area in glaring need of revisiting. UT Austin Staff Council surveys continually reflect staff dissatisfaction with how A permits are managed. We request that the President direct Parking and Transportation Services to come up with a solution to remedy this flaw with the A permit structure.

---

<sup>1</sup> Parking and Transportation Services 2008-09 Annual Report, page 24.

## **Transportation Opportunity #1: Align Capitol Metro/UT Shuttle Bus Routes for Optimum Service**

### **Capital Metro Alignments**

UT Parking and Transportation Services already works very effectively with Capitol Metro to review student geographic and ridership data when determining routes. However, with relatively minor adjustments, many existing bus routes could be modified to better serve the needs of faculty and staff, too.

The process for selection is simple: Find local routes that come close to campus (within about 8 blocks), but not as close as is practically possible. Routes already identified by the UT Austin Staff Council as candidates for adjustment include 3, 10, 18, 19, 20, 37, and 137. Indeed, in January 2011, the UT Austin Staff Council resolved to submit specific route adjustments (identified by Transportation Solutions Committee member Gary Thomas) to Capital Metro for consideration for fall 2011 route alignments, and these suggestions were subsequently scheduled for public input in the most recent Capital Metro cycle. See Appendix B for the UT Austin Staff Council resolution in support of these changes.

Similar opportunities exist to provide University-specific requests for modifications to other routes. However, it takes time and effort to crunch residential data for faculty and staff, and then compare it with existing Capital Metro routes. The Transportation Solutions committee was able to do this for the current year for the most obvious routes, but we could not address them all. Plus, as residency patterns change, these results will need to be reexamined.

We suggest that this become a regular duty of an existing staff member of Parking and Transportation. Working together with Human Resources, from data similar to that provided in the 2008 Employee Commuting Report, this person could develop a geographic information system (GIS) mapping of faculty, staff and student home addresses and overlay this data onto maps of Capital Metro services to determine where small changes could make a big difference.

### **UT Shuttle Routes**

The UT Shuttle Committee reviews shuttle bus operations and routes. We would like UT Austin Staff Council to be represented on this committee. Historically, the reason for not including the staff on the committee has been that the shuttle service is funded by compulsory student fees, and therefore all decisions about shuttle service must be overseen by a Student Government committee. However, half of the funding for this service comes from Capital Metro, which collects a 1% sales tax on purchases. Since UT Austin Staff contribute to shuttle operations by means of this

sales tax<sup>2</sup>, we request representation in the discussions about a benefit we value and want to preserve.

Having a voice on the UT Shuttle Committee is an urgent matter because the faculty/staff Capital Metro ridership contract is set to be renegotiated in 2012. Participation on the UT Shuttle Committee would allow staff to make suggestions for stops along existing shuttle routes and to consider staff as well as student residence patterns when determining the alignment of new services.

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.statesman.com/news/local/uts-shuttle-subsidy-under-scrutiny-810125.html>

## **Transportation Opportunity #2: Increase Remote Parking Options**

As long as cars are still a primary means of transportation, it would be helpful to those who must commute to have more remote parking options at reduced permit costs augmented with reliable, frequent, and direct bus service. This bus service could be supplied either by UT Shuttles or by Capital Metro service (which are increasingly less distinct from each other in regards to branding and equipment); however, we favor UT Shuttles, as they are more direct and have shorter transit times. As long as both remain free options for students, faculty, and staff, the distinction between them is more one of management of routes and optimum frequencies than of increasing actual service. What is critical for increased faculty/staff adoption is that very direct service be available at peak times, and not just when students are in session.

The simplest idea is to promote increased use of the existing remote parking options, including Disch-Falk Field, the Longhorn Lots, Lake Austin Center, and the PRC. Currently staff on the 40 acres tend to think of these lots as too far away to be desirable parking alternatives, but if they were branded as UT's own Park & Ride option, with route and schedule information provided about how to get from these lots to campus (similar to the map in Appendix A), more staff might avail themselves of this alternative.

Another idea is to negotiate the use of new remote parking locations at areas further away from campus. We propose that Parking and Transportation investigate a pilot program to identify one or two parking lots that are underused during weekdays and could be rented and operated with a self-funded model through the sale of remote parking permits. Ideally the lots identified would be located near existing UT Shuttle or Capitol Metro lines, in an area that has been targeted for a high volume of faculty/staff nearby residences. Suggested locations for more remote parking include:

- The former SkyPark parking lot at 2900 Manor Road
- Austin Community College Campus at Highland Mall
- AISD sports facilities such as the Burger Stadium or Nelson Field
- Kyle (IH 35 & FM 150)
- Four Points (2222 & 620)

## Conclusion

Spending the year analyzing issues related to campus transportation has given us a much deeper appreciation for the complexities of this issue. Legislative prohibitions limit the allowable funding for use on parking; the designation of Parking and Transportation Services as an auxiliary enterprise means that it must consider not only how best to serve campus, but also how to maintain operations that break even at year end; and the lack of space on the main campus means that the best use of land for the University's academic endeavors often results in the sacrifice of surface parking for faculty and staff. Managing these complexities is indeed challenging, and our colleagues in Parking and Transportation Services often face a thankless task.

Many of the issues our committee originally identified for research have already been addressed. These include introduction of a membership based car-share service on campus (ZipCar), support for cycling to and around campus, and improvements to Capital Metro routes to add stops closer to campus. We look forward to implementation of some or all of our recommendations in the next year to help improve the transportation picture for all of campus.

We wish to note with great appreciation the many people who have helped us with our research. Particular thanks go to:

- Jeri Baker, Assistant Director for Parking and Transportation Services, who served as our committee's official liaison and mentor, attended many of our meetings, and was hugely helpful.
- Bobby Stone, Director of Parking and Transportation Services, who was quite forthcoming on the challenges, opportunities, and future plans of the Parking and Transportation unit.
- Blanca Juarez, the Manager of Alternative Transportation in Parking and Transportation Services.
- Julien Carter, Associate Vice President for Human Resource Services, who provided key information early on in our meetings.
- Roberto Gonzalez, the Strategic Planning & Development Manager Short Planning for Capitol Metro, for sharing his time, expertise, and enthusiasm with us.

It is clear that these key players are all open and willing to explore solutions with the UT Austin Staff Council that will better move more people to, from, and around the University of Texas campus.

# Appendix A: Capital Metro Flyer

# Take the Train to Work

Faculty, Staff and Students ride FREE with UT ID Card



**466**  
Rail Connector Route  
Serving the UT  
Pickle Research Campus

**Kramer/Domain**



Look for these signs to connect with the Red Line



**FREE PARKING**  
from Kramer Ln  
to the Brockton Dr curve

466 MON-FRI/COUNTERCLOCKWISE Morning				
TRAINS ARRIVE KRAMER STATION	1 KRAMER STATION	2 DOMAIN	1 KRAMER STATION	TRAINS DEPART KRAMER STATION
6:25	6:28	6:36	6:46	—
7:10	7:13	7:21	7:31	7:44
7:45	7:48	7:56	8:06	8:19
8:20	8:23	8:31	8:41	8:54
9:05	9:08	9:16	9:26	9:40
9:39	9:42	9:50	10:00	10:13
—	10:16	10:24	10:34	10:42
—	10:44	10:52	11:02	—
—	11:16	11:24	11:34	11:42
11:41	11:44	11:52	12:02	—

466 MON-FRI/COUNTERCLOCKWISE Afternoon				
TRAINS ARRIVE KRAMER STATION	1 KRAMER STATION	2 DOMAIN	1 KRAMER STATION	TRAINS DEPART KRAMER STATION
—	12:16	12:24	12:34	12:42
12:41	12:44	12:52	1:02	—
—	1:16	1:24	1:34	1:42
1:41	1:44	1:52	2:02	—
—	2:16	2:24	2:34	2:42
2:41	2:44	2:52	3:02	—
3:08	3:13	3:21	3:31	3:42
3:41	3:46	3:54	4:04	4:12
4:12	4:21	4:29	4:39	4:47
4:47	4:56	5:04	5:14	5:22
—	5:31	5:39	5:49	5:57
5:57	6:00	6:08	6:18	—
—	6:35	6:43	6:53	7:01
—	6:57	7:05	7:15	—

**DESTINATIONS**

- IBM
- Kramer Station
- National Instruments
- Pickle Research Campus
- The Domain

Additional Bus Stops



GO LINE 474.1200 | capmetro.org

Capital Metro flyer providing UT-specific route information for employees at the Pickle Research Center. (Originally created by Robert Giles, UT Austin Staff Council.)

## **Appendix B: Staff Council Resolution 2011-01**

### **THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN STAFF COUNCIL**

#### **RESOLUTION No. 2011-01**

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN STAFF COUNCIL GENERAL SESSION  
SUPPORTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS  
COMMITTEE FOR MODIFICATIONS TO CAPITAL METRO ROUTES FOR  
IMPROVEMENTS IN MASS TRANSPORTATION ACCESS FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF  
TEXAS AT AUSTIN MAIN CAMPUS COMMUNITY.

**WHEREAS** several existing Capital Metro local service routes pass within a moderate distance of the core UT Austin campus, yet do not maximize convenience for UT campus riders and potential riders; and

**WHEREAS** parking for private vehicle commuters to campus is scarce and traffic is congested; and

**WHEREAS** shifting commuters from private vehicles to mass transit will relieve traffic and parking congestion for the greater UT community; and

**WHEREAS** improving the locations of bus stops to be closer to the core of the main campus supports the goal of the University of Texas at Austin Campus Master Plan to “place almost every major campus destination within a five-minute walk to a transit stop”; and

**WHEREAS** The University of Texas at Austin Staff Council has a vested interest in making the University a desirable, accessible, and competitive work environment;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that The University of Texas at Austin Staff Council requests that Austin Capital Metro adopt the attached recommendations for local service route modifications from the University of Texas at Austin Staff Council Transportation Solutions Committee.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that upon implementation of all or part of these recommendations by Capital Metro, the University of Texas at Austin Staff Council recommends that appropriate communications from Human Resource Services, Parking and Transportation Services, and/or other appropriate UT offices be created and distributed to ensure whole University community awareness of improved transportation alternatives; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that informational copies of this resolution be sent to the President, to Human Resource Services, to Parking and Transportation Services, to the Faculty Council, to Student Government, and to the Graduate Student Assembly to keep them informed about this request to Capital Metro.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the University of Texas at Austin Staff Council the 20 day of January, 2011, by the following vote:

AYES: 44

\_\_\_\_\_  
Benjamin H Bond, Chair

NOES: 0

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph Gregory, Vice Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phillip Hebert, Recording Secretary

The University of Texas at Austin Staff Council  
Transportation Solutions Committee  
Request for Capital Metro Route Modifications  
January 2011

In the interest of improving access to the Capital Metro system for the entire UT main campus community, we have identified seven Capitol Metro local routes passing within a distance of between four and eight blocks of the UT core campus. This distance is a long enough walk that it deters potential bus commuters from using these routes to get to the UT main campus.

We are requesting modifications to these routes to improve direct access to the east (San Jacinto) and west (Guadalupe) edges of the core campus. As discussed with Capital Metro's Roberto Gonzalez in the November Staff Council Transportation Solutions subcommittee, the suggested route modifications are as follows:

1. Modify the following local routes to include travel and stops along Guadalupe Street for all of, or at least some portion of, the west side of the campus core between Dean Keeton Street and 21<sup>st</sup> Street:
  - Route 3
  - Route 19
  
2. Modify the following local routes to include *travel and stops* along San Jacinto Blvd. for all of, or at least some portion of, the east side of the campus core between Dean Keeton Street and 21<sup>st</sup> Street:
  - Route 10
  - Route 18
  - Route 20
  - Route 37
  - Route 137

Thank you for considering these route changes to improve the accessibility of the UT main campus to bus commuters.