TAPS Parking Fees: Frequently Asked Questions
April 2016

Q: Why should I have to pay for parking at all?
A: The Master Plan for Higher Education requires that services such as parking, housing, recreation, and bookstores within the University of California may not rely on State funds for their operation. Thus, the cost of parking at all UC campuses has to be paid for by user fees. TAPS is trying to do this in as equitable a manner as possible, based on similar rate structures used at other UCs. To that end, we anticipate receiving campus approval to implement parking permit requirements at the Coastal Science Campus and 2300 Delaware (both UC-owned off-campus sites) later this year.

Q: Why can’t the price of a permit be tied to an employee’s salary, similar to our tiered health care benefits?
A: When determining the framework for making parking increases, the University must consider its obligations under policy and similar obligations to its represented employees through their respective collective bargaining agreements. If the University unilaterally changed the framework for determining or setting parking fees, such as linking it to an employee’s salary, this impact would affect both represented and non-represented employees. For our represented employees, the University cannot make unilateral changes to its parking fee framework without negotiating these changes on a systemwide level or, depending on the employee group, obtaining employee representative consent prior to enacting the change. To that end, absent negotiating a parking fee framework across all collective bargaining agreements, it would be administratively infeasible and inequitable to have different pricing frameworks for different portions of our employee populations.

Q: After years of stagnant salary growth, we are finally getting increases. Why are you proposing this increase now?
A: The lack of salary growth is in part why we’ve deferred increases for ten years. Because we’ve held parking fees steady, we’ve had to use the reserves intended for future capital construction costs to pay for regular operations.

Q: Why don’t you install traffic signals or controlled pedestrian crossings instead of hiring all those students? Wouldn’t that be a cost savings?
A: The Traffic Control program has the benefit of only being in place when it’s needed, and is also responsive to the amount of traffic on the road at any given time. It also doesn’t rely on pedestrians pushing a button before the walk across the street (which has been a problem at the pedestrian crossing on Heller Drive). In addition, the amount we pay for students is a fraction of the cost of installing traffic signals or controlled pedestrian crossings.

Q: We’ve all had to deal with decreasing budgets. Why can’t you just live within your means?
A: Like many other campus units, we have decreased our staffing (by 20%) while handling increased numbers of transactions, and managing changing regulatory requirements. We have watched parking revenues decrease while operating costs – despite belt-tightening – continue to rise. The price of the new parking spaces that TAPS is required to build is significant (over $7M over the next ten years). It is not possible to fund these projects
through reductions in the operations budget. The Campus needs to have reserve funds for the capital projects that will be developed in the next few years.

Q: What happened to last year’s fee proposal? How is this one different?
A: This is the same proposal with one important change: the definition of a carpool will remain as it currently stands (e.g., two or more people constitute a carpool). After the feedback during last spring’s comment period, campus administration wanted additional time for further vetting, and a different review process. Senior leadership created a new representative advisory committee, and spent three months conducting a thorough review of TAPS programs and operations before endorsing the proposal for distribution and public comment.

Q: I recently read that Cabrillo College funded their parking structure through a bond. Why doesn’t UCSC do that?
A: Most of the facilities at Cabrillo College, including their parking lots and structures, have been funded through local bond measures approved by the voters of Santa Cruz County. While user fees help fund the operation and maintenance of their facilities, much of the construction cost is funded by taxpayers. This is dramatically different from the funding model adopted by the University of California, where parking facilities are defined as an ancillary service funded by user fees and not the state (i.e. taxpayers).

Q: What about all the income TAPS gets from writing parking citations?
A: Parking Enforcement is a part of the University Police Department, not TAPS. TAPS receives a $3 “parking fine surcharge” for every citation collected; this amounts to approximately $35,000 a year, and is used to help fund alternative transportation programs.

Q: I’ve heard the Bike Shuttle program might be eliminated. Why isn’t that mentioned in this proposal?
A: The Bike Shuttle is funded out of mandatory student transit fees, not parking fees, and is therefore not included in this proposal.