

Proposed Parking and Transportation Plans at the University of Idaho

A new fee structure, designed to accommodate long-range transportation improvements and parking and transportation operations, is being proposed. The change, supported by a long-range plan and last year's fee proposal recommendations, is needed to sustain operations and services.

Effective organizational planning, accurate budgeting and forecasting and prudent management of funds is crucial at all times but especially so in light of the current economic downturn. A long-range plan and fee proposal has been developed to help Parking and Transportation Services at the University of Idaho address economic challenges and meet the future transportation needs of the Moscow campus. The proposal was derived and based upon the information gathered through the Transportation Plan Update process and through concerted planning efforts within Parking and Transportation Services over the last year.

Transportation planning and research efforts launched last year identified parking fees at the University of Idaho as historically, and currently, too low to sustain an effective and safe campus transportation system. While Parking and Transportation Services has taken steps to reduce operating expenses, the department has assumed the additional expense of annual snow removal.

To sustain the parking system and generate sufficient revenue to meet future campus needs and improvements endorsed by the Transportation Advisory Group, a correctional upgrade in parking fees must be assessed to users over the next 4-5 years. The \$74 Residential (Green/ Silver/ Purple) permit price has been identified as too low compared to the Commuter (Red) permit, which currently is \$144. Our priority is to keep commuter lots (Blue) affordable while correcting the rates for residential student permits to equal that of commuter students by the year 2014.

Parking and Transportation Services is a self-sustaining organization without the support of external funding. Financial planning proformas have provided an accurate long-range financial planning tool for use in computing fee bases and correcting undervalued and/or inequitable permit pricing. The Transportation Plan has identified needed improvements and it is important to begin efforts now to ensure that the campus transportation infrastructure will meet future needs. The full proposal outlining recommendations, operation costs, financial forecasting proformas, and proposed projects identified to meet future transportation needs (including pedestrian safety improvements) can be viewed at www.uidaho.edu/parking .

We realize that fee increases may be viewed negatively when enacted during an economic downturn. However, the gradual fee increase over a five-year period will improve the safety and quality of the campus transportation system for its users. No one is certain what vehicle use will look like in the future, but we do know that effective transportation systems and infrastructure for pedestrians, bicycles and transit will be important. Even with a fee increase, the University of Idaho's parking rates are reasonable and, in fact, can be compared favorably to those charged at other universities. We encourage you to examine the plans underway for improvement.

Carl Root is the manager of Parking and Transportation Services at the University of Idaho. More information about Parking and Transportation Services and the proposed changes for the next fiscal year are online at www.uidaho.edu/parking.