

## **CLASSIFIED INPUT INTO PARKING ISSUES**

In response to a request for information from the Parking Task Force, in October, 2005 CEPAC solicited answers to five questions from the MSU classified staff (approximately 1,100 people). Of these, approximately one hundred people work remotely, and communications are sporadic with a further 250. Of the latter, possibly as many as half work at night or commence their shifts very early in the morning. It may then be assumed that the majority of this group, totaling 350, experience few parking problems on campus.

One hundred and two responses were received (about 13% of the probable possible total constituency). These respondents often offered multiple comments under the same question and thus the potential total number of comments per question could exceed 102.

### **Summary of Findings**

(please see the charts and bullet points below):

Input was offered in a positive vein, and included comprehensive and constructive ideas for parking/travel alternatives.

The concept of a multi-storey garage as a solution to MSU parking problems was supported by 40 comments (with or without reservation). However, these were outnumbered by the accumulation of comments offering other alternatives as highly viable. Perceived options appear to lie predominantly with re-organizing the existing facility, and investigating transit opportunities (including a possible collaborative planning effort with the City).

The classified staff members offering input here do not appear unduly concerned about issues of user safety except, possibly, in the context of a parking garage. However, those suggesting provision of long-term, remote parking do see the security of the lot as a necessity.

With some frequency, comments are accompanied by an expression of parking as an issue of staff moral. Many are concerned over ever-rising parking fees, and several report the FY06 pay increase as largely exhausted after meeting campus-related expenses (parking, benefits, etc). The perception that staff must "pay to come to work" is commonly expressed. Many responses refer to increasing numbers of costly, reserved spaces being provided at the expense of regular tag holders (through loss of S/B spots). A fear of escalating cost, and diminishing service for lower paid staff, is clearly articulated. Overall, (although the opposing opinion was voiced by a couple of people) the staff appears to favor parking priorities for employees over students.

Having reported these impressions, CEPAC notes its awareness of classified employees' utilization of reserved parking opportunities. Also, of resident students' need to work, and their associated transportation requirements.

<b>Thinking of the campus as a whole, what do you perceive the parking problem to be?</b>	
44	Misalignment of spaces:
	- provision of too many reserved spaces (catering to the “elite”; spaces often go unused)
	- no provision for oversized vehicles
	- insufficient motorcycle and bike parking facilities
	- employees / visitors / students should have designated parking per category of user
	- no provision of designated employee/student/visitor areas
	- insufficient temporary parking (delivery/visitor)
21	Growth (too many cars for the existing space)
17	There is no problem – plenty of parking if everyone would walk
15	Hang tags over-sold
4	Lack of an alternative to current parking (bus, etc)
2	Inadequate signage
2	Transportation resources (not just parking resources)

- The most common concern associated with this question was the loss of productivity to the search for parking, and the “commute” from the parking space to place of work.
- Several staff members explained their need to come and go from campus at all times of the day. Others spoke of equipment they must carry on to the job. A couple mentioned the impossibility of walking for some employees.
- Seventeen comments express the opinion that no parking problem exists - if those who are able would walk further.
- Fifteen comments cited the over-selling of hang tags as contributing to the parking problem.
- Personal safety issues did not appear to warrant priority among these classified respondents. A few (5) respondents mentioned the after-dark safety of female students and employees using existing lots. The suggestion was made, with reference to resident female students, that women could be housed in the residence halls with existing parking in close proximity, with men relocated to Hannon and Hapner. One woman noted the lack of safety concerns, in the general female population, when associated to parking at the mall, etc.

<b>How do you consider a shuttle or transit might fit into parking operations?</b>	
42	In favor of a campus shuttle / Park and Ride
31	In favor of local community transport
12	In favor of remote community transport (Livingston, Belgrade etc)
2	In favor of transit at a later stage
16	Transit would be under-utilized
1	Existing bus sufficient

- The 32 “mass transit/shuttle” responses to the question “*if not a parking garage, then what?*” are not included in the table above, and vice versa
- There was obvious support for the shuttle/transit concept, with some respondents expressing conditions:
  - The frequency and convenience of pick up points was the major concern (if it’s not handy, and doesn’t run often and for long enough people won’t use it).
  - The cost should be kept to a minimum and, in the case of a shuttle, be included in the parking fee. Responses were mixed over whether or not transit should be self-sufficient, but only two suggested tuition should form part of the fund base.

- MSU would need to invest in a major advertising program and efforts to bring about a change in philosophy regarding walking/car pooling/busing.
- Respondents of the opinion that transit would be under-utilized predominantly reasoned that:
  - neither Bozeman nor the campus were large enough to warrant or support it
  - insufficient appeal to the population (eg. gas would have to be *extremely* expensive before people gave up the convenience of their car)

<b>Do you have concerns about the need/cost of a parking garage?</b>	
17	Garage is a good idea – no reservations expressed
23	Garage is a good idea – with reservations
35	The garage is too expensive for the spaces realized/in relation to other campus needs
32	The garage will not solve parking problems/serve the correct population/ is not needed
8	Safety – risks inherent to a parking garage outweigh the security of close proximity to other buildings
6	Other cost concerns
5	Concerns over congestion around 8 <sup>th</sup> /Harrison etc
5	Defer construction until mass transit has been adequately considered

- Most respondents appeared to have some background knowledge of the garage proposal, site etc.
- Some of those in favor of building a garage cited reservations, including:
  - The site – it would be better constructed at the Fieldhouse, Gattton, or other central locations where, among other things, revenue from visitors to sporting and other events could be maximized
  - Capacity – it needs to be bigger, or to be constructed to accommodate future expansion
  - Usage – it should be open to use by all, and possibly include commercial and/or MSU office space
  - Last resort – be built only if it's not too expensive, and/or when park and ride options are exhausted.
- Comments opposing the parking garage described various concerns:
  - the net number of spaces realized being insufficient to warrant the outlay
  - the populations who will benefit will not be the most appropriate
  - the esthetics of the building
  - the availability of parking during construction
  - permanent running costs.

<b>If not a parking garage, then what?</b>	
32	Mass transit/shuttle
21	Provide remote, secure lot possibly though not necessarily with shuttle
20	Disallow parking for campus residents/off campus residents of within walking distance
19	Work with the City on opening street parking/mass transit/long term plans/needs
11	Increase incidents of car pooling (possibly offering incentive to pool)
7	Pave dirt lots
5	Underground parking garage or parking on top of existing flat roofs
2	Building projects should be required to provide parking plan
2	Stagger working/class hours
2	Pedestrian walkways/or bridges

1	Place a parking lot on the intramural field
1	Cheap permits on the F lot (and move the dirt pile to allow parking)
1	Hang tags associated with a specific spot (ie. all reserved, at regular price)

- The responses to the question “*how do you consider a shuttle or transit might fit into parking operations?*” are not included in the numbers above.
- There was significant support for encouraging walking, cycling and car pooling. Some comments suggested incentives, others felt that transit vehicles could include bike racks for user convenience once on campus.

<b>Other issues?</b>	
16	Parking fees or classified staff should be waived/reduced/sliding scale
14	Address visitor/handicap parking issues
13	Maintenance of existing lots (snow/ice removal; potholes/trash)
10	Lots, such as Gatton, should not be closed for special events
6	Preserve green and recreation space
3	Fines should be meaningful and violators should be towed
1	How is the revenue from oversold hang tags used?

- Several respondents identified visitor/handicap parking issues, but for a variety of reasons. Some felt there were too many, others too few. Some considered that visitors should park remotely and be shuttled to the center of campus, others that visitors should always park conveniently and at no charge. Several thought that more should be made from the revenue potential of visitors to sporting and other events.