

Transportation & Parking Committee
{Meeting: 1:15 p.m. December 2, 2020 via Zoom}

Attendees: Richard Ashley, Jeri Baker, Kirk Felton, Tommy Lam, James McClain for Mac Babb, Nick Quint, Ryan Speer, Eric Martin, Roberto Leon, Diane Agud, Sandra Gabbert, Pam Tate, Betty Anderson

Richard Ashley noted a slight change to the agenda: Nick Quint's presentation on campus scooters was postponed until the next meeting.

Discussion of ParkMobile progress

Jeri Baker reported that ParkMobile is now live on campus, with an announcement forthcoming. She shared steps that a ParkMobile customer would see when using the app and highlighted several features:

- There will be five-digit numbers designating on-campus zones where customers can park.
- These zones all begin with 85; the code 85001 will allow users to park on the campus at large.
- A customer can register up to five vehicles on their account.
- Customers can select a countdown feature that will alert them when time is running out
- Time can be extended if permitted in that zone.
- The app is intuitive to use and a great option for short-term visitors.

Jeri then opened the discussion to questions.

Q: Can ParkMobile be used for special event parking, such as basketball games?

A: Yes, special event rates and times can be set as needed.

Q: How does ParkMobile work for enforcement?

A: The app integrates with Flex, the system currently in use to verify permits and vehicle registrations. The parking enforcement officers (PEOs) will not see a permit, but will be able to enter a vehicle's license plate and then verify that the parking has been purchased. No personal information will be viewed.

Q: What if students park in faculty/staff spaces?

A: When a customer signs onto ParkMobile, they agree to abide by regulations, which includes parking in appropriate areas. Currently PEOs do check the daily permits for this; as ParkMobile is rolled out, customers will be given the benefit of doubt and citations will be processed accordingly.

Q: How will ParkMobile affect current permit holders with hangtag-style permits?

A: ParkMobile is designed for customers with short-term and/or part-time parking needs, to include individuals who may be coming onto campus less frequently than usual. It can be considered a "tailor-made permit".

Q: Will there now be a need to increase the number of meters on campus?

A: ParkMobile can turn almost any parking space into metered parking, eliminating the need for a physical meter. Furthermore, increments of time that have been purchased will be able to "follow" the user across campus to another location.

Q: Will the price of a faculty/staff permit be reduced?

A: ParkMobile will allow for more cost-effective permit purchases, since the customer will be buying only the increment of time that they actually need, rather than a daily permit at the full price of \$6.

Q: Will this cause an overwhelming demand for parking? Will there be enough spaces?

A: Customers are already purchasing the daily permits; ParkMobile is simply offering them a better value by shifting how they buy blocks of time. If parking availability does become problematic, spaces reserved exclusively for permit holders can be created.

Q: How can ParkMobile differentiate between the different types of customers?

A: PEOs can currently check to see the status of an individual and some access to that information will remain available through Flex. There could be people who try to cheat but it is better to go with the assumption that they do not; signing onto ParkMobile does have a reminder that a customer has agreed to follow the rules.

Q: Will faculty and staff be able to park in student lots? Are there still spaces reserved for graduate teaching assistants (GTAs)?

A: The second level of the Perry Street Garage is reserved for all graduate students. There is also graduate student parking in the Litton Reaves lot. It has been approximately 18 months since this took effect and there have been no issues, signaling that parking for graduate students is adequate. Spaces in the Perry Street Garage are not oversold, which helps ensure availability. Although faculty previously could not park in GTA spaces, permit holders are now able to “park down” (F/S in C/G lots/spaces and C/G in R lots/spaces).

Q: How will this affect ADA parking?

A: If a customer has a Virginia Tech permit *and* a Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles-issued plate/placard, they can park in any legal space on campus. Parking Services works with Pamela Vickers in the Office of Equity and Access to identify locations where additional ADA spots may be needed.

Q: Would it be helpful to notify all individuals who have previously purchased the daily permits about the implementation of ParkMobile?

A: Jeri is working with the communications team on a news blitz.

Q: Are there extra costs involved with using ParkMobile?

A: There is a nominal (\$.30) user fee that is charged once per transaction. Virginia Tech will pay the credit card fees.

Q: Can ParkMobile assist in finding available parking, or does that remain incumbent on the user?

A: Jeri is in discussions with Eric Bianchi, a Virginia Tech graduate engineering student and founder of a software company called Paradigm, on ways to integrate the technology and offer such a resource.

Q: Can warnings be issued if a particular lot is filling up?

A: ParkMobile has the potential to turn off zones, but this would require a significant investment in monitors and sensors. It is easy to gauge capacity in the parking garages because of the limited entry and exit points. This option is presently infeasible, but it could be considered in the future.

Discussion of this topic will continue at our next meeting.

TPC meeting time for the spring semester:

To accommodate participants' schedules, meeting times for the spring semester will change to 2:00 PM, still on the first Wednesday of the month. The January meeting is cancelled because of holiday break, so the next meeting will be held Wednesday, February 3 at 2:00 PM via Zoom.

There were no other items to discuss and the meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.