

Transport and Parking Plan (PP) Questionnaire, 2003:

http://www.biols.susx.ac.uk/home/Jeremy_Maris/parking/

The Survey

The questionnaire was advertised by a letter in the *Bulletin* and by *ad hoc* emails to various faculty lists and to members of MSF and Unison.

There were 298 responses to this questionnaire representing:

academic staff	44.3%	salaries < £12k	2.0%
non-academic staff	45.6%	salaries >£ 12k < £22k	29.1%
postgraduates	8.1%	salaries > £22k	55.7%

83% of respondents are car drivers. The under-representation of those earning less than £12k is probably because few have access to computers.

Summary of responses

The majority of respondents usually travel to work by car (76%). These car drivers would rather “pay as they go” by daily pass (59%). They believe that the purchase of an annual pass would discourage using alternative transport (65%) and many of them (33%) would be encouraged by “pay as you go” charges to use alternative transport when convenient.

Respondents are strongly opposed (82%) to the daily charge being more than the pro-rata annual rate. They are equally split between (a) charging during term time only or (b) reducing the daily rate to 70p/£1.40 to restore the original intent of the Transport Strategy as approved by Senate and Council last summer. It is clear that the proposal to charge 50% more for “pay as you go” has no support and is perceived to be against the objectives of the Transport Strategy.

Many respondents (70%) commented in detail on the transport policy and a representative selection is appended.

Analysis of responses and comments.

It is clear that availability of public transport affects attitude to charging. Those people who have to use a car because of caring commitments or inadequacy of public transport are particularly opposed to charging; if there is to be charging they expect something in return for their money eg a guaranteed space. Those people for whom public transport is a reasonable option are not opposed to charging.

The charges are high, particularly for those near the £12k and £22k salary boundaries, and substantially more than those at other campus universities which charge according to salary (typically 0.3%) or otherwise less than £100 per annum. Charging car users who have no alternative a premium to subsidise public transport for others is not welcome. There is also criticism of FTE salary rather than actual salary being used to determine the charge band, of the level of charges for visitors and comment on the special circumstances of graduate students on low incomes.

It is notable that 17% of cyclists who responded (11 of 66) have had a bicycle stolen from campus.

The questionnaire and responses can be seen at http://www.biols.susx.ac.uk/home/Jeremy_Maris/parking/

They have been made available, with the analysis software, to the Transport Manager.

Compilation of comments submitted with questionnaire

Few missed the opportunity to add personal perspective to their responses. These comments fall into roughly nine categories. Those quoted below are chosen to reflect the breadth of detail, criticism and opinion, but only the full array truly conveys the strength of feeling.

Many see increasing financial hardship and increasing inconvenience in lives already dominated by overtime, as well as apparent oversight of many details which substantially affect both personal lives including safety and childcare and the way the University works. Some comments have been shortened, but, it is hoped, not altered in detail or thrust.

Public Transport (PT) is unavailable, unreliable and impractical

“I cannot afford 3 hrs travelling time a day ... charges are nothing short of a pay cut.”
“It is tight standing room only (morn and eve) at present. How are [more] to squeeze in?”
“As a D.Phil. student, I work unsociable hours. I need to be at U when PT doesn't run...”
“Does the U really believe that PT will cope with all the extra people ...?”
“I live in a rural area poorly served by PT. Late night trains are often cancelled and I would be stranded.”
“I would be more likely to travel by train if there were more after 6pm.”
“The PP fails to solve my problem which is the lack of bus service to Woodingdean.”

Financial hardships and a tax on salary

“It's not the University's job to so forcefully re-educate its staff in environmentalism.”
“Having moved from the north where PT is more available, ... incensed that U is taxing me for the privilege of working in underpaid employment in one of most expensive areas of [UK]”
“As a Ph.D. student I earn less than £7,500 and find meeting costs difficult without charge.”
“Some people's salary is already spoken for. Are we supposed not to pay our electricity bill?”
“I live 13 miles from U. By train and bus I would leave home at 6:45 and it would cost £10 pd.”

Charging scheme is incentive to use cars less – or more?

“£1 pd in term-time would encourage me to use PT more often, but at the rate suggested, I would buy a permit and use it every day.”
“Rather than being an incentive, this scheme ... punishes those who use alternative transport.”
“The effect of the PP is that I would not be able to teach at 9:15 unless I buy a permit. If I buy a permit I would only rarely use the train as I do on other days at present.”
“By charging higher daily than annual rates, annual [pass] holders will use their cars MORE!”
“I would be inclined to take the bus or cycle on those days [when I could] if there were some sort of financial incentive. The current (proposed) system provides none.”
“The only measure that would effectively reduce usage of cars would be much reduced fares on PT to the U and not the taxing of already underpaid staff and students”

Childcare needs make public transport impossible or impractical

“...have to drop off 2 children at school ...although would love to use subsidised PT...impossible.”
“[PP] does not take into consideration parents who do school run. No viable alternative options.”
“I have to take a child to school, I work part-time on a low salary and would look for a job elsewhere if charges are enforced.”
“ a mother with children to drop off at 2 schools. PT impossible. I feel I am being punished!”

Extra commuting time will be University's loss of work-time, or employment

- “If forced to PT, the U would loose out as I would stick to 7.5 instead of 9-12 hr working day.”
- “My family comes first and a car buys time for their daily needs. My service to the U would be penalised by more than “out of pocket. Family friendly policies at U are dead.”
- “My car journey takes 13 minutes. It would be 50 minutes by train. Anything other than car travel will seriously affect my time at U or time with wife and kids.”
- “Frankly I shall simply come in less often (only as often as is necessary)”
- “I would certainly try to minimise my presence here, and students would find me less available.”

If any parking charges, then how much?

- “There is no way that I can get to U sensibly by PT ... I disagree with charges altogether.”
- “Do not make us take a pay cut to get to work.”
- “... to insist on paid parking without guaranteed space is ridiculous.”
- “the annual ticket should be based on the cost of daily fee”
- “Are they prepared to offer refunds to poor saps who have paid, then find nowhere to park?”
- “I don't pay according to salary when I park in a public car park.”
- “There should be some sort of assessment based on postcode which works well at Surrey.”
- “the car share database should have been established and in use for some time before the charges are introduce to give people a chance to adjust to any alternatives.”
- “I strongly object to the University taking my money upfront (and gaining the interest on it) when there is no guarantee of a space.”
- “The [parking] charges are VERY high cf other Universities”
- “I don't understand why postgrads paid less than £12,000 are charged and staff who get less than £12,000 are exempt”
- “I am determined not to accept this evil pay cut.”
- “Many post grads are required to be here full time, earn well under £12k, yet are not exempt.”
- “In principle I agree that parking should be paid for if the provision is going to be better than it is now, and if public transport were less expensive”
- “Sometimes environmental justice and social justice are at odds with one another and environmental concern is of course, more profitable.”
- “A charge for parking is a cut in salary. Our salaries are unacceptably low, therefore a parking charge is unacceptable”
- “ I would be happy to pay for parking provided we could be guaranteed a parking place and not just the right to hunt for a spot”

Do we welcome visitors by charging them, and charging them so much?

- “I disagree with parking charges because they are so unfriendly to visitors.”
- “It will discourage ... people to visit i.e. teachers, parents, school kids, etc.”
- “It is important to charge visitors all through the year, to prevent park-and-ride use by outsiders”
- “I disagree with parking charges because they are so unfriendly to visitors.”
- “U will damage its admissions, productivity and retention by implementing this dreadful TS.”
- “The first impression is that the visitor is not appreciated and is discouraged from visiting.”
- “I think there should be cheaper/free parking for visitors”

Advice about parking problems and reducing car use, “Environmental” or not

- “There need to be more carrots and fewer sticks.”
- “The U has NOT done enough to ensure adequate PT to discourage car use.”
- “... in my working day I visit patients as in Uckfield and rural areas... I cannot find anyone including Linda Newman who will discuss what qualifies as “essential use”.
- “The U has no green issues in mind, it simply wants us to pay for car parks.”
- “Have any studies been made of train capacities?”
- “Surely the U, a major employer, can put pressure on PT to improve train service.”
- “I'd like to see the return of a combined rail/bus annual ticket.”
- “...object to the U's moralising stance of charging exorbitant fees. Social engineering not its business.”
- “see what effects of banning resident student parking before introducing draconian measures?”

“A joint approach with Brighton U would add weight to approaches to transport authorities.”
“Perhaps reducing the time people queue with their motors running to get off campus every night would ... benefit the environment.”
“If the University really wanted... commitment to green travel perhaps they could campaign to reopen the Uckfield/Lewes rail link which would help travel from the north.”
“Why can't the U be grateful for decent hardworking staff? ... Do they want to lose us all?”
“Are we to get refunds when we cannot park?”
“the promotion of more flexible working practices are needed so that people can work from 10-6, 11-7, so that the volume of traffic is staggered more across the day”
“U has an out-of-town campus and must provide adequate parking for those who work and visit. New car parks should be a high priority.”
“If the area is of such outstanding beauty that we have to pay to park our cars, how come Brighton & Hove football stadium is to be built on our doorstep? Will all supporters be travelling by train/bus? Where's the concern for the environment in this instance?”
“How does the U expect to improve its standing with what could be a significant number of resentful staff?”

Cycling to University?

“Need more and safer bike lanes than on Lewes Rd. Did you see the flowers by Moulescomb?”
“Bike security is a major issue, and not taken seriously by management or security staff”
“... we need more covered bike racks ... many are useless and unused.”

Compiled by

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25 June 2003