

G. Transportation

1. Introduction: Conventional transportation systems, based largely upon the internal combustion engine, are major contributors to both global climate change and local air pollution. Sedentary lifestyles, supported by automobile commuting, are considered a leading contributor to an obesity epidemic in the US. Acknowledgement of this problem has led to the development of several strategies for creating healthier and more fuel-efficient transportation systems.



Transportation is often neglected in campus planning (with the exception of automobile parking), though a few urban campuses have found ways to influence student and staff choices. Given that automobile transportation is the leading means by which an American burns fossil fuels and emits toxic air pollutants, university efforts that can help staff and students adopt less harmful transportation options will reduce the amount of pollution indirectly caused by a campus. For many commuting students, the costs of maintaining and using an automobile for transportation may be the second highest cost of college attendance after tuition (equalling the cost of dorm housing); thus, transportation options may impact classroom success, retention and graduation rates for students with financial difficulties (e.g. working long hours or unable to pay tuition). UW Oshkosh is the second smallest campus in the UW system, and parking lots seriously diminish aesthetics and green space. Transportation also provides a significant opportunity to build stronger links to the City of Oshkosh, which can play a major role by providing public transportation and improving the infrastructure and traffic enforcement that enable and encourage pedestrian and bicycling options.

The campus also maintains a wide range of vehicles for business use (automobiles and trucks), transporting groups (buses), deliveries, teaching and research including automobiles, trucks, vans, buses and boats.

2. Goal: To reduce automobile trips to campus by 20% by 2012, through incentives and improvements in sustainable alternatives.

3. History

a. The 1999 campus master plan acknowledges the need to make the campus more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. The plan calls for re-routing traffic around the perimeter of the campus, closing Algoma Boulevard, and creating a pedestrian mall.

b. A comprehensive parking plan was developed in 2003-4 to address a perceived shortage of on-campus parking spaces. While the plan does not promote sustainable transportation practices, it provides a precedent for future planning activities. This plan advocated the construction of two parking ramp buildings, and the conversion of current parking lots to be converted into green space. The first parking ramp is under construction in 2007.

c. In 2003, UW Oshkosh began contracting with the Oshkosh Transit System to allow all students, Faculty, and Staff to ride the city public bus system for free with a campus identification card.

d. In 2006, the university made a decision to convert the campus fleet to E-85 compliant vehicles. All new vehicle purchases will be able to operate on E-85, an ethanol based fuel. The older, gasoline only vehicles will be phased out over time.

e. In 2006, the Facilities Department switched to a 10% biodiesel/90% diesel fuel mix for all vehicles and equipment that operate on diesel.

f. Many new bike racks have been purchased and installed throughout campus over the past several years.

g. A ride sharing board is in use at Dempsey Hall.

4. Action Plan . In order to accomplish the goals listed in this section, the following recommendations should be enacted:

Initial Consideration:

- *Create a comprehensive Campus Transportation Plan to balance the needs of all commuters to campus.*
 - *Partnership with the City of Oshkosh is essential.*
 - *Rising use and parking of bicycles and mopeds should be addressed.*
 - *The parking fee price structure should be reviewed and revised to reflect the true costs of parking and/or market rates (e.g. responsive to supply and demand) and avoid subsidizing automobile drivers. There should be substantial financial savings for commuters who carpool.*
 - *A significant amount of Compact car parking spaces (e.g. 25%) should be designated in every parking lot. They should be located at the preferred spots near building entrances.*
 - *Create incentives such as preferential parking for hybrid, high efficiency and biodiesel vehicles.*
 - *Establish incentives to encourage students to not bring a vehicle to campus. One suggestion was that a student who elects not to bring a vehicle to campus would get his/her first choice in the selection of a residence hall.*
- *Designate a Director of Transportation Services. This should be more than a title change for the Director of Parking, as “parking problems” will become one of many equally important factors in a sustainable transportation plan.*
- *All campus vehicle purchases shall be fuel efficient and environmentally friendly. For now, that means the campus is limited to the purchase of E-85 compliant, high miles per-gallon vehicles. The State of Wisconsin limits purchases to American-made vehicles, thus the most efficient vehicles and hybrids on the market cannot be acquired. If and when state policies change, the campus should revise this recommendation.*

Within Three Years:

- *Develop an education program geared to all campus constituents regarding the true cost of automobile ownership. More than just the purchase price – fuel, maintenance, insurance, registration fees, impact on the environment.*
- *The health dimensions of transportation choices and the benefits of walking and biking for exercise should be emphasized to students, faculty and staff through education and incentive programs.*

Future Consideration (Five years or greater):

- *A substantial research initiative must be launched to improve the understanding of the travel behavior and demand of the campus population. This information will impact planning priorities and focus areas for campus improvements. Transportation behavior and choices will be strongly influenced by the availability of housing, shops and entertainment on and near the campus.*
- *Create adequately designed facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.*
 - *sidewalk and path width that can accommodate large numbers of socializing students/staff (more than single-file traffic).*
 - *bike lanes (e.g. minimum 5-foot width) on campus and on adjoining streets.*
- *Provide shuttle bus services at key travel times of the year. For example, bus service to Outagamie Airport could be provided at the Winter Recess and at the beginning and end of each school year.*
- *Purchase electric powered Cushman/Mule and pedal-powered vehicles wherever feasible for on-campus travel.*