



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
STAFF COUNCIL

Date: October 16, 2020
To: Richard Cate, Vice President for Finance and Administration
From: Caleb Gilbert, Staff Council President
Laura Clayton, Staff Council Vice President
Re: Parking Fee Recommendations
CC: Gary Derr, Vice President for Operations and Public Safety

We appreciate that senior administrators sought Staff Council leadership's input on the ongoing budget crisis faced by UVM Transportation and Parking Services (TPS). We also appreciate being asked in a timely manner so that our input could be taken into consideration before decisions are made. Inviting us and other members of the UVM community to contribute to making important decisions is vital to creating equitable policies and maintaining morale on campus.

Through partnership with TPS and Staff Council Representatives, we have arrived at the following three options to address the TPS budget shortfall, listed in order of preference.

Option A - Preferred

We propose a tiered, reduced fee structure wherein UVM employees pay a percentage of the going rate for pre-pandemic parking fees:

- Staff earning below \$55,000 pay 25%
- Staff earning between \$55,000 and \$75,000 pay 50%
- Staff earning between \$75,000 and \$95,000 pay 75%
- All others pay 100%

We further recommend that the University remove the upper cap on parking fees, as this cap negatively affects TPS revenue while advantaging only higher salaried staff.

We prefer Option A in part because it brings more lasting revenue to TPS. We also prefer this option as the more equitable solution. While acknowledging the extra work this tiered approach would require of University Financial Services (UFS), we are confident that with the support of senior leaders, UFS will be successful in making these changes. This has been demonstrated this year by the quick and efficient implementation of similarly tiered adjustments to the salaries of non-represented staff. Overall, during the pandemic, UVM has shown both the agility needed to change systems and processes quickly, and the willingness to engage in the detailed, deliberate work required to address and maintain equity.

Ultimately, an equitable solution will be the most reflective of the values espoused in Our Common Ground.

Option B - Alternative

For this alternative fee structure, we propose that all UVM employees pay 50% of their usual parking fees from November 1, 2020 through June 30th, 2021. In addition, as with Option A, the upper cap on parking fees should be removed.

The clear advantage to Option B is the greater ease of implementation. However, it is not a permanent solution, as it does not address the entirety of the budget issues faced by TPS. It does still contain limited equitability due to the already established fee structure based on percentages of salary, which we print below for quick reference:

EB (Employee Brown): 0.32% of base salary

EW (Employee White): 0.48% of base salary

EG (Employee Green): 0.64% of base salary

Option C - Hybrid Alternative

As TPS staffing and services begin to be affected by their budget shortfalls, and as additional costs related to winter snow removal in parking lots is fast approaching, they have become focused on the urgent need to increase revenue quickly.

Because Option A might be difficult to implement quickly, we are willing to support a hybrid approach that begins with the stopgap measure represented by Option B while working in earnest to achieve a more equitable, long-term solution like that modeled by Option A.

Unless some other means is identified to fund TPS at its current staffing and service levels while maintaining the parking fee holiday, we do not recommend delaying a solution to the TPS budget shortfall.

Conclusion

UVM employees are struggling to make ends meet. Housing, energy, and heating costs remain high, and the ability to work additional jobs to balance home budgets has been adversely affected by the pandemic. Despite these hardships, employees still support the commitment of our senior leadership to make hard choices to balance our UVM budget. Alongside this support is the firm expectation that senior leadership will build and expand on the University's history of equity and fairness.

We look forward to hearing from senior leadership about other ways we can work together to make our University a stronger institution and a more welcoming and equitable place to work.