



It's in demand, in short supply and in dispute

By SHAUN McCREA
Of the Emerald

"Please don't do an expose on us," exclaimed Ann Trenman of Campus Security. "We have enough problems as it is."

Trenman was referring to the lack of available parking around the University — especially the lack of student parking. Despite the fact there are 1,952 parking places in the University's 35 lots, only 862 of those are for students — the other 1,190 are for faculty, staff and some graduate teaching fellows.

The small number of student parking places available creates an overload on streets surrounding the University and often draws the ire of residents who can't park in front of their own homes.

A few neighborhood associations are trying to alleviate the problem through limited parking times, but concede that only shifts the problem — it doesn't solve it. Most neighborhood associations want to work with the University on future parking plans; some, like the West University Neighborhood Association (WUNA), have definite ideas.

"Some people in our group want to eliminate cars completely," said Charlotte Lemon, chair of WUNA. "I think that's too extreme. Instead, I think the University should use the land behind Kaufman's to build a nicely landscaped, two-story parking structure. Not a high-rise, but a carefully done building like the county lot. Of course a parking structure has its own problems: finding a good design, excavating a basement and obtaining financing.

"Other possibilities," she continued, "are to build apartments without parking and give students without cars a reduced rate for living there, or to uniformly restrict parking times in congested areas."

But the University isn't interested in expanding parking around campus. Under the auspices of the Campus Planning Committee (CPC), the Subcommittee on Transportation has developed the University Transport Plan, a set of guidelines to direct future University policy and planning on transportation. That plan does not include provisions for new lots or parking structures.

"The University is trying to encourage people to use existing lots by providing lower rates," said Robert Harris, head of CPC, "but it's also important to the University not to generate more traffic around campus — and that's what new parking lots would do."

Harris explained the University must maintain

consistent policies on parking. "Campus Planning cannot oppose quasi-freeway plans through campus and then turn around and erect new access routes or shiny parking structures."

"Parking is an awkward subject," Harris said. "I know most of the neighborhood associations think more parking would solve the problem. As it is right now we have one lot that isn't even full — the one on 15th and Moss. If that lot isn't full I doubt building another parking lot would guarantee solving the problem."

Many of the University's limitations on parking are economic. David Rowe of the University Planning Office explained a provision in the state constitution that requires funding for parking maintenance and development generated by revenue from existing parking — a sort of "Catch-22."

"It's all really a matter of economics," Rowe said. "We tried to induce people to park in the 15th and Moss lot by offering a reduced fee and still the facility is never used — if we can't fill the lot at \$9 then we're not going to make any money to expand lots or build new ones.

"Of course I understand the problem," he added. "If you can park on a city street for free, why should you spend even \$9 a year for a sticker?"

Another dimension of planning is considering land use: is a parking lot really worth the cost of what could have been built instead?

"I don't know," Rowe answers. "It takes 300 to 350 square feet to park a car — that's three and one-half faculty offices a parking place. I don't know if we can afford to use our land that way."

The University is faced with the expectation that future parking can only become more difficult for people driving to campus, and they are also stuck with trying to find a solution to it.

The University Transport Plan provides for alternatives to each person driving to campus, none of them new, but as energy and space become more expensive and scarce, each alternative becomes more important. The ideas range from mass transit and bike and foot traffic to the old standby of carpooling.

There are no easy avenues to a parking solution. As Rowe summarizes, "It's a matter of changing your lifestyle — away from cars, and let's face it, that's not easy."



Photo by Greg Bryant

Bumper to bumper parking, where it's available, is common around campus. The lack of parking spaces has upset both students and nearby residents. But the University views any further construction of parking sites as adding to the problem.

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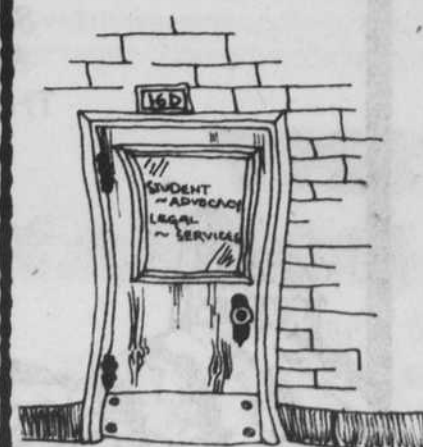
BETWEEN WILLAMETTE & M. JACOBS
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The Office of Student Advocacy (OSA), an ASUO funded agency, is located in the basement of the old half of the EMU, room 16D.

OSA director Don Chalmers acts as the ombudsperson in grievances between students and the University, student employers, and state agencies. Cases commonly handled range from residency disputes to charges of alleged hiring or housing discrimination.

The Legal Division provides the professional services to full time attorney Chuck Spinner for legal advice and information. Chuck will also help students with name changes, divorces, incorporation, etc.



New this fall will be the Student Defender Division. Third year law students working with Chuck will act as legal representative in Student Court, and in select cases accompany low income students in criminal proceedings at the discretion of the directing attorney.

OSA is also available for speaking engagements on issues of student rights.