

University of Arkansas Campus Transportation Plan

Executive Summary

November 2005



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Planning for a Sustainable Future

The University of Arkansas, located in Fayetteville, Arkansas, is the flagship campus of the University of Arkansas system. Fayetteville is the quintessential college town, combining an historic campus with a vibrant downtown, abundant outdoor recreational opportunities, and an active local arts and music scene. The University and the adjacent downtown area are the heart of the community.

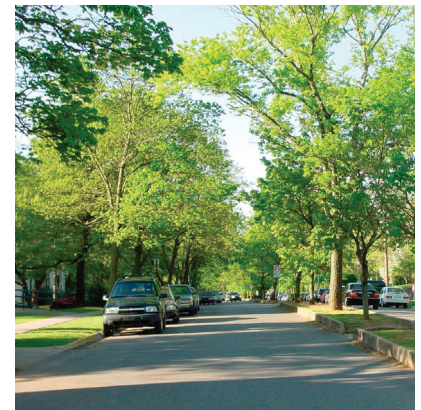
The University is experiencing significant growth, which is anticipated to continue into the foreseeable future. This growth puts pressure on limited land resources and the transportation infrastructure serving the campus.

Furthermore, the Northwest Arkansas region is expected to almost double in population over the next 20 years. This will place unprecedented demands on the region's transportation system, requiring new approaches to addressing transportation needs, and in particular a shift away from car-based commuting patterns.

Like most growing campuses, the University struggles with the increased demand for parking that is associated with adding faculty, staff and students to a limited physical space. Faculty, staff and students expect to have inexpensive (or even free) parking as close to the front door of their office, classroom or dorm as possible. But meeting these expectations requires trade-offs. Traffic on and around campus is congested. Pedestrian safety is compromised. Buildable land is sacrificed for parking lots. Open space opportunities are lost. And environmental conditions deteriorate. Campuses that pursue car-first solutions tend to lose their attractive atmosphere and culture.

The University of Arkansas, however, is committed to growing sustainably and responsibly, to preserving the history and charm of the campus, and to creating a positive legacy for future generations of faculty, staff and students. Even though the campus' transportation system has yet to reach critical conditions, the system will continue to deteriorate as growth continues. Now is the time to plan to meet these challenges.

This *Campus Transportation Plan* provides a strategy to address the University's current and future transportation needs. The Plan reflects the University's commitment to sustainable and responsible growth. It focuses on transportation plans and policies that meet the growth challenge while addressing the sustainability goal and enhancing the campus environment. The *Campus Transportation Plan* presents recommendations for Streets, Transit, Bicycles, Pedestrians, Travel Demand Management (TDM) programs, and parking. Highlights of the Plan are illustrated on the figure at the end of this Executive Summary.



A view down tree-lined Arkansas Avenue

University transportation policy shall, above all, further the academic mission of the University of Arkansas and contribute to the intellectual and physical development of its students, faculty, and staff.

Purpose And Guiding Principles

At the outset of the planning process for the *Campus Transportation Plan*, a purpose for the Plan and a set of guiding principles and standards were developed to frame discussions and inform decisions. While some of the standards evolved during the process, these policies and standards were an integral part of idea development along the way. They are detailed in full below.

Purpose and Principles

The purpose of the University of Arkansas *Campus Transportation Plan* is:

- To provide a campus that is conveniently and safely accessible by foot, bicycle, automobile, and transit;
- To provide a safe and reasonable flow of traffic with preferred vehicular routes clearly identified;
- To provide adequate parking, conveniently located or served by transit; and
- To improve the appearance of key campus streets.

The fundamental principles of the plan are:

- University transportation policy shall, above all, further the academic mission of the University of Arkansas and contribute to the intellectual and physical development of its students, faculty, and staff.
- Transportation planning shall treat the campus in the context of the wider community and region.
- Transportation and wayfinding shall contribute to a high-quality campus environment.



Central campus walkways

Policies And Standards

The Central Campus is primarily regarded as a pedestrian, bicycle, and public transport zone. Unnecessary automobile traffic in that area is discouraged. Internal campus streets are considered primarily for emergency, transit, and service vehicle use.

The University will work toward reducing the load on arterial and residential streets, on and near the campus, by providing alternates to commuting by private vehicle and by implementing parking policies and transportation improvements that will reduce the need to use an automobile to travel around the campus.

The University will partner with the City of Fayetteville to provide handsome streets that enhance pedestrian safety, to improve streets and key intersections near campus, and to modify identified roads as needed for adequate and safe access for pedestrians and cyclists.

The University will recognize the needs of pedestrians and the disabled on campus by

providing adequately-wide sidewalks along streets and internal to campus, by offering more benches and seating areas along walking routes, and by adjusting crossing signals as necessary for safe passage.

Moving people shall be an essential element of overall planning at the University of Arkansas.

The University will provide a comprehensive wayfinding system, in conjunction with visitor information centers, to assist persons entering and moving around the city and the campus by car or other means.

Site Planning

- Activities with a high degree of public interaction should be sited in peripheral locations where greater concentrations of vehicular traffic can be accommodated.
- Activities that depend on frequent delivery service, especially by large trucks, should be located adjacent to major thoroughfares or sited to minimize truck travel through the central campus. If this is impossible, then large trucks should be offloaded to smaller vehicles for travel within the central campus or deliveries must be made after normal working hours.
- All campus activities should be either readily and safely accessible by foot and bicycle, or served by transit if located beyond a comfortable walking distance.

Commuting and Transit

- Improve, expand, and promote Razorback Transit and collaborate with other regional providers.
- Improve transit service around and within campus to the level that transit becomes the preferred mode of travel for trips too lengthy for walking or bicycling.
- Provide transit service between the central campus and north and south university property.
- Study providing direct transit between outlying areas of University population and campus.
- Develop and enhance commuting modes such as transit, ridesharing, park-and-ride, and cycling. Encourage the formation of carpools through preferential parking rates, convenient parking locations, and ride-matching by geographic area.
- Offer and promote incentives for using transportation modes other than the automobile.
- Evaluate outlying University property for park-and-ride.



Razorback Transit

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- Assess flexible working hours for employees to match bus schedules.
 - Provide transportation alternatives, such as night service between entertainment areas and student housing.
 - Provide bicycle racks on transit buses that serve outlying areas.

Roadways

- Consider new street connections from the north and south to improve traffic access to the University and Downtown entertainment areas.
- Reaffirm the University's opposition to bringing additional arterial traffic to roadways surrounding the Central Campus.
- Reaffirm the University's position that Arkansas Avenue should be neither extended, closed, nor moved.

Pedestrians

- Form a pedestrian network that is visually distinct from the road system. Carry pedestrian paving through drives, etc. to give pedestrian paths visual priority.
- Design pedestrian paths to cross roadways at right angles. Make crossings distinct and highly visible.
- Connect the campus to the City's planned and existing trail system.
- Improve pedestrian safety on campus streets.

Bicycles

- Work towards development of a basic circulation system for bicycle travel to and within the campus. Establish bicycle lanes and pathways on University streets as deemed appropriate to facilitate safe movement. Clearly mark such pathways in as unobtrusive a manner as is consistent with safety concerns.
- Provide safe, secure, and convenient bicycle parking options.
- Investigate the establishment of dismount zones and designated bicycle lanes or paths.
- Identify opportunities to provide cyclist routes separate from pedestrian paths on campus.
- Provide amenities that encourage cycling (showers, storage, repair facilities) when possible.
- Promote cycling as an alternative mode through education, etc.

Automobile Parking

- Seek to provide adequate parking for visitors, faculty, staff, and students while also preserving the quality of campus and adjacent neighbor-

hoods and providing options that reduce reliance on the automobile and, thereby, the demand for parking.

- Minimize the use of central campus land for parking. Allow only new lots in the central campus which will aid in the immediate reduction of total parking area. Remove existing central campus lots for new buildings, consistent with the campus master plan.
- Build parking decks to accommodate any new parking demand. Locate and design decks to minimize visual and traffic impacts on the campus and surrounding neighborhoods
- Screen central campus lots from view with landscaping and/or garden walls while maintaining security.
- Provide short-term parking for occasional visitors and visitors on official business by designating areas near administrative offices, ticketing, etc. for this use. Costs of visitor parking should be borne by the visitor or the units they visit, as deemed appropriate.
- Provide adequate parking at cost for any University employee whose job requires living on campus.
- Locate new parking in order to minimize impacts on pedestrians. Distribute short-term parking closer to campus, where possible, and long-term spaces in peripheral locations.
- Provide tree canopy at parking lots that, at minimum, meets City of Fayetteville codes and ordinances.
- Provide resident students the option of parking in lower-priced, secure, remote facilities served by transit.
- Move resident student parking to remote facilities served by transit.
- Provide safe and adequate evening parking.
- Price parking to reflect convenience and the true cost of building, administering, maintaining, and securing lots and structures.
- Cooperate with the City of Fayetteville in establishing restricted parking zones that discourage commuter parking on neighborhood streets.
- Investigate the feasibility of encouraging faculty, staff, and students to live on or conveniently close to campus by making provision for infill and restored housing in the surrounding neighborhoods (up to 1 mile) by backing development and maintenance of such housing or developing financing models to assist campus personnel in purchasing and renovating existing homes. Any subsidy would be exchanged for the "right" to a parking tag.
- Explore how modifying morning and afternoon class schedules might balance loads on existing campus parking and reduce parking demand during peak hours.



Recently completed Harmon Avenue Parking Facility

Streets

Many communities are seeking a more balanced approach to addressing traffic congestion by considering transportation within the wider context of community values and emphasizing more sustainable modes of travel. This approach is equally applicable to the streets that make up and surround the University campus. While moving traffic safely and efficiently is a goal of the *Campus Transportation Plan*, the intent from the outset was not to identify and recommend street capacity improvements that would provide a specific level of efficiency. Rather, improvements are considered within the broader context of the campus environment and principles. Street improvements are recommended to address projected congestion, to improve pedestrian safety and to improve the appearance of the street.



Razorback Road

Razorback Road

Razorback Road, slated for widening between Maple Street and 6th Street, forms a significant edge to the campus. It is a major entry route to the campus (including major sporting events), but does not project a strong or positive image. It also lacks intersection treatments, crosswalks and sidewalks, making it unfriendly to pedestrians. Recommended improvements to Razorback Road include:

- Widening to four lanes with no median
- Adding three traffic signals
- Adding sidewalks, planting strips, and street trees to both sides of the street
- Adding and improving crosswalks and intersections for pedestrians



Four-lane street with no median in Chapel Hill, NC

Other Campus Streets

Maple Street, Dickson Street, Stadium Drive and Arkansas Avenue function well for automobiles, but currently function poorly as important campus edge streets. Campus edge streets should not only move automobile traffic, but also accommodate pedestrians and bicycles and be attractive streets. Their character should also alert drivers that they are entering a pedestrian-oriented campus environment.

As part of the *Campus Transportation Plan*, new designs were developed for these four streets. The designs were developed not only to move commuters of all modes, but also to add to the academic and historic sense of place of the University. The design objectives, common to all four streets, included:

- Improving the safety and comfort of pedestrians walking along or crossing the road.
- Creating a street environment that projects the desired image of campus.
- Improving the appearance of the street with streetscaping.
- Providing a safer cycling environment.
- Providing for safe and effective traffic flow.

Off-Campus Improvements

Center Street functions as a through route and also serves the southern part of campus, including the Harmon Avenue Parking Facility (HAPF). It was not designed for the traffic volumes it now carries, but its historic residential character must be respected in any improvements. Improvements to the Center Street/Harmon Avenue and Center Street/Duncan Avenue intersections are recommended to increase the street's current capacity, especially in light of the opening of the HAPF.

It is also recommended that the University continue to work with the City of Fayetteville to develop a connection to the campus and downtown from the north. Access from the south via 6th Street will also be critical as the southern part of campus continues to develop.

Travel Demand Management

In addition to promoting transit, cycling, and walking, there are a number of other techniques, known as travel demand management (TDM), which the University can employ to reduce the parking demand. These programs provide commuters with a menu of options that permit them to choose how they want their commuting needs met. Recommended elements of an effective TDM program include:

- Developing park-and-ride lots at Baum Stadium and/or the Farm/Fairgrounds
- Developing a free ridematching service for carpoolers and vanpoolers
- Instituting a Commuter Assistance Program that would provide incentives to not buy parking permits
- Exploring opportunities for a parking cash-out program for those not buying permits
- Developing a "flexparking" system
- Hiring a transportation demand management coordinator to educate and assist commuters in using alternative modes

Transit

Two transit systems currently serve the University and the City: Razorback Transit, operated by the University, and Ozark Transit, operated by the Ozark Regional Transit Authority.

Razorback Transit is well tailored to the needs of students commuting to campus. While occasionally demand outstrips capacity, they are typically well-balanced. The major impediments to increased use of Razorback Transit are a lack of knowledge about the system, a lack of connections to other modes, especially cycling, and future funding uncertainties.

Recommendations to help to increase the effectiveness of Razorback Transit as an

alternative mode include eventually adding bike racks to all buses, increasing promotion of Razorback Transit, expanding transit service to growth areas, supporting connections to, and development of, regional transit initiatives, and identifying funding sources to meet future needs.

Bicycles

Bicycles are a primary transportation mode for college communities throughout the country, especially for students. They are a cheap, easy-to-use way to get to and around campus, avoiding traffic congestion and the hunt for on-campus parking. Bicycle ridership to the University of Arkansas, however, is very low.



Bicycle facilities, such as bike parking, should be improved to promote bicycling

The city streets around the campus lack an extensive system of on-street or off-street bike facilities. The City of Fayetteville has adopted the Fayetteville Alternative Transportation and Trail Plan, an ambitious plan to improve bicycle transportation in the greater Fayetteville area.

A key component of the *Campus Transportation Plan* is to create on-campus linkages to the proposed City trails and on-street facilities, in order to extend the attractive routes into the campus itself. On campus, it is critical that there be well-marked, safe routes which provide access to the entire campus. Striped bike lanes are not recommended for campus streets, however, signed bike routes are recommended. It is also recommended that bike parking, especially in the Central Campus and around high activity centers, be increased, and that bicycling be promoted on campus.

Pedestrians

An important purpose of the *Campus Transportation Plan* is to make the campus more pedestrian-friendly. The sidewalk and path system on campus should have no missing links and intersections should be safe and easy to maneuver. Streets should be designed with the pedestrian in mind.



Pedestrian safety is a primary goal of the Campus Transportation Plan

In general, the Central Campus has an extensive network of sidewalks and paths, but connections to campus need to be improved to complete the pedestrian system. Pedestrian access to the campus is generally good from the north and east, but generally poor from west of the campus.

The recommendations for streetscape improvements to Razorback Road, Maple Street, Dickson Street, Stadium Drive and Arkansas Avenue will help improve the environment for pedestrians on campus. Other recommended improvements include: improving intersections and crosswalks to enhance safety, adding sidewalks where necessary to eliminate missing links, and improving pedestrian connections at the edge of campus.

Parking

The University has sufficient parking spaces overall to meet current demand. The completion of the Harmon Avenue Parking Facility (HAPF) has significantly increased the total parking supply, providing adequate parking on campus for the near future. However, this

increase will only be temporary. A number of surface parking lots will be lost in the coming years with build out of the Master Plan, eating away at the supply increase. Additionally, parking demands will continue to grow with further growth in student enrollment and faculty/staff employment. The result will be a shortage of parking.

Parking Values

The University should adopt a set of core values related to parking and the physical development of the campus. While providing adequate and convenient parking is a critical component of a successful campus, it should not be provided at the expense of limiting open space opportunities, pedestrian safety, or the University's history and character. These core parking policies, which reflect the guiding principles of the *Campus Transportation Plan*, are summarized as follows:

- Minimize the need for constructing additional parking facilities on campus through travel demand management strategies.
- Locate future parking on the periphery of campus.
- Remove interior surface parking lots over time; convert lots to buildings or open space.
- Do not create new surface lots in the campus interior.

Reduction Potential

It is strongly recommended that the number of new parking decks built on campus be minimized by reducing the commuter demand for parking on campus. This would reduce the amount of land consumed by parking, improve the pedestrian quality of the campus, and reduce the overall cost to the University. Travel Demand Management (TDM) programs recommended in the *Campus Transportation Plan* have the potential to reduce the projected long-term parking demand of 5,355 spaces by 1,850.

Parking Recommendations

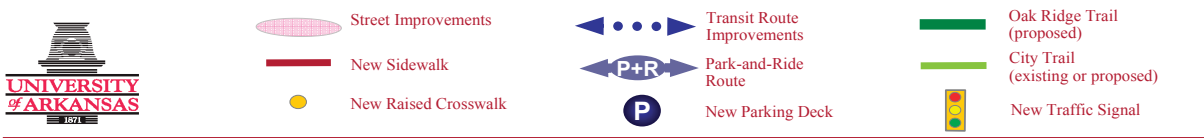
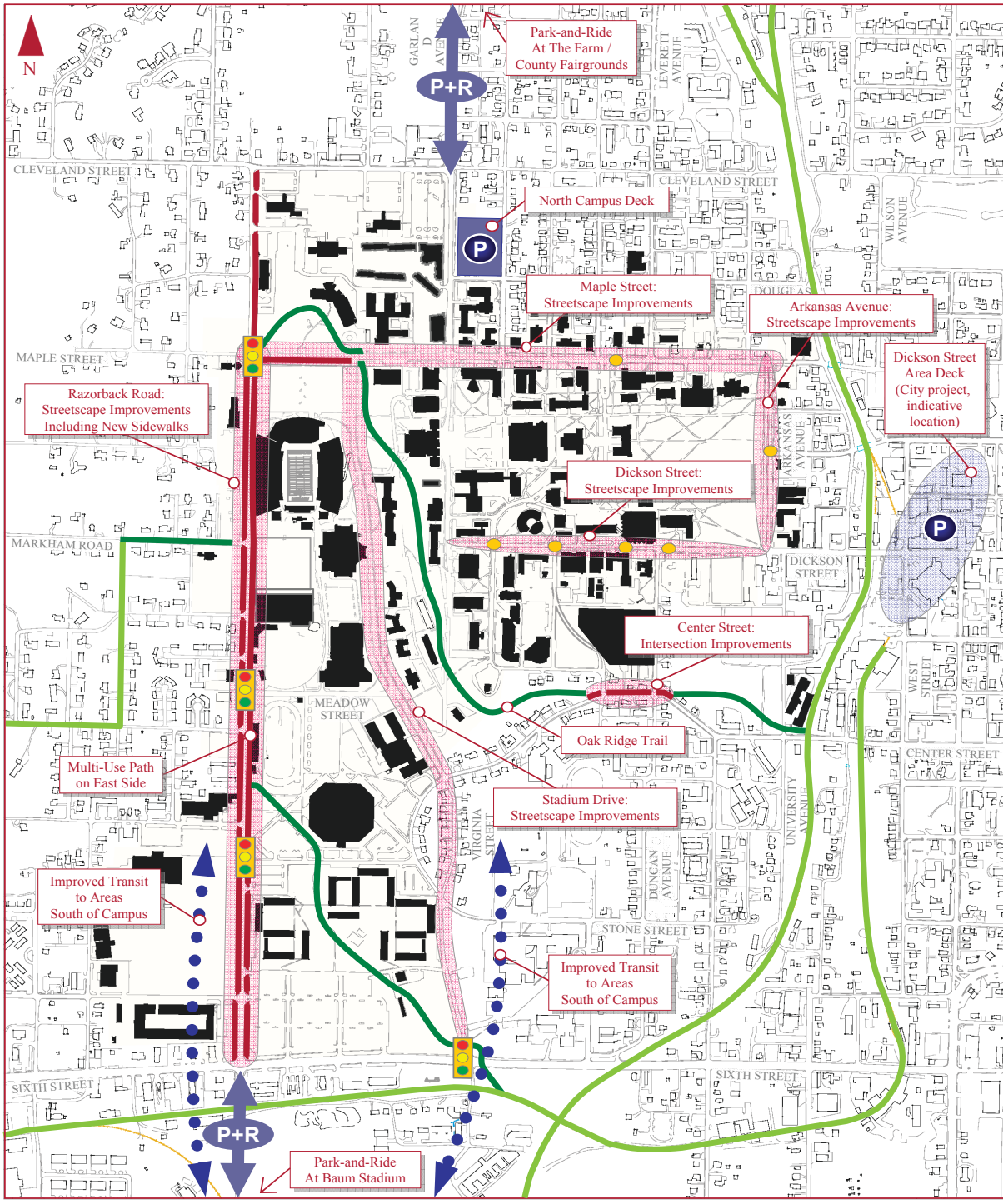
It is recommended that a new parking deck be constructed at the intersection of Garland Avenue and Douglas Street. In the long term, the University should investigate the potential for increasing permit costs to cover the actual cost of the parking system, and should consider restricting permits for on-campus residents.

While providing adequate and convenient parking is a critical component of a successful campus, it should not be provided at the expense of limiting open space opportunities, pedestrian safety, or the University's history and character.



Parking lot on east side of Garland Avenue - potential location for next parking deck

CAMPUS TRANSPORTATION PLAN



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