



## Parking spaces not easy to find

How long has it been since you last played hide-and-seek?

You've probably played a modern version of this childhood game more recently than you might think.

When was the last time you tried to find a parking place on campus?

If you found one with no difficulty at all, consider yourself extremely fortunate.

If you didn't find one easily, a quick glance at some figures may reveal the reason.

At the end of September, 8,251 student vehicles had been registered with the Department of Traffic and Motor Vehicle Registration. Faculty and staff members had registered 6,337 vehicles.

Less than 7,000 parking places exist for those 14,588 vehicles. And more than half of the parking places — about 3,900 — are for faculty and staff members.

Allen S. Waters, director of UNC Operations and Engineering and chairman of the Traffic and Safety Committee, described the problem as "a matter of simple arithmetic. We have too many cars for the number of spaces we have."

Gordon H. Rutherford, director of facilities planning, said the present parking deficit is about 4,000 spaces. He said the 1968 deficit was estimated to be only 800 spaces.

"Presently, the most critical area is commuting student parking," Rutherford

said. "There is only about one commuting student space for every three and one-half stickers issued. The commuting student by far and away has it the worst."

Rutherford said the resident (dorm) students "have it the best," explaining there is about one space for each permit issued.

Rutherford noted it would require 32 acres of land to make a parking lot big enough to solve the 4,000-car deficit.

Waters said he, too, was "very much aware of the very serious commuting student parking problem. We have a large number of students who cannot get to their classes except by automobile. And yet we do not have the facilities to park the commuting students."

"The faculty also has a problem," Waters noted. "Those who have classes at a time other than 8 a.m. find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to drive into the campus. Those who have to move around during the day — such as those who must go to Duke or to the Research Triangle and return — find it impossible; once they leave they can't get back to a parking space."

Alonzo G. Squires, director of the office of Traffic and Motor Vehicle Registration, said the figure of 8,251 student cars "is not an accurate registration." He explained that a number of off-campus students — possibly several

thousand — have not yet registered their cars.

"We've been unable to check to determine if all off-campus students have registered their cars," Squires said.

"Because of a shortage of funds, the number of students working in this office has been cut from 12 to six. We simply haven't had the manpower to search for unregistered off-campus student cars."

William D. Locke, administrative director of Traffic and Police, said the parking problem is basically unchanged from last year. "We still have a shortage of parking spaces in some areas; it's worse in some areas than in others."

However, Locke said, "the situation is not really as bad as people make it out to be. Commuters are worse off than anybody else, but at the same time, there is commuter parking in the Craig Dormitory parking lot."

"I can see where commuters might not want to walk all the way to North campus, but there is bus service," Locke continued. "If Craig is the only place you can find to park, then that is where you're going to have to park."

Locke did admit the bus service was not as conducive to the commuting students as it could be.

The traffic and parking problem on the UNC campus did not happen overnight.

Nor will it be solved overnight.

It's been more than ten years since the first study of parking was made. At least two other studies have been made during the past decade, yet no action has been taken to provide for the long-range parking needs of the campus.

Rutherford summed it up very simply: "Transportation solving is decision making."

Story by

Harry Smith

## No money in parking dilemma's meter

Almost everyone on campus agrees that a severe parking problem exists.

It's a discussion of possible solutions to the dilemma that sparks a debate.

"No matter what you do to solve the parking problem," Gordon H. Rutherford, director of facilities planning for the University, said, "the ultimate decisions are going to be unpopular with some either because of where they have to park or what they have to pay to park."

"The campus Traffic and Safety Committee has brought up recommendations on how to solve the parking problem time and time again. But your solutions are fairly limited: you can build high-rise parking facilities, you can build outlying lots and provide a shuttle-bus service, or you can further restrict automobiles."

Allen S. Waters, director of operations and engineering and chairman of the Traffic and Safety Committee, agreed, noting that "Almost any solution that a person can think of has been thought of by the committee and has been considered at one time."

"But each of them has serious drawbacks and will result in very drastic measures having to be taken on this campus. The drawbacks to the proposals generally fall into categories: land usage, financial difficulties, and access and traffic congestion."

"And any solution," Waters continued, "is going to cause economic or geographical inconveniences to some but not all of the users."

One of the major considerations in any plan to help solve the parking problem is money.

The University Engineer, in the 1961 study, recommended that a six-level parking structure be built on the site of the present bell tower parking lot and Tin Can area. The structure, to be built in four phases, would have provided 4,400 parking spaces at a cost of \$7.26 million. Estimates for a similar structure today run well over ten million dollars.

The 1967 parking study, prepared by Wilbur Smith and Associates at a cost of about \$18,000, recommended constructing several parking garages

providing 4,000 spaces at a cost of \$11 million.

Rutherford said such a program would require average annual parking fees of more than \$100 per car. "The relative cost depends on your frame of reference. Commercial parking garages in large cities commonly charge in excess of \$200 per year. But if you've never paid for a parking space, you're not going to like it."

John L. Temple, assistant vice-chancellor for business, said "I don't think it is reasonable to expect the state to pay for high-rise parking facilities on this campus. They don't do it for state employees in Raleigh and I don't think the legislature will agree to providing high-rise facilities in Chapel Hill. We have got to work it out so that revenue bonds will finance any parking facilities."

"There are many, many people," Rutherford continued, "who would jump up and down and scream and holler at the thought of putting high-rise parking structures anywhere on the campus. Introducing more cars into the campus would only make the already-present congestion worse."

Rutherford said the town is not really planning anything that is going to help the University, "although they said they would cooperate in any way they can. In many ways, the town is very tolerant about allowing parking on roads adjacent to the campus."

Chapel Hill Mayor Howard Lee said, "In the short range, Chapel Hill is going to have to build multi-storied parking lots. In the long-range view, however, the University and the Town will have to come together and plan for some peripheral parking, considering the banning of most traffic from the central city, and making available free transportation, like minibuses, to the center city."

Temple said the planning department is preparing a current look at the parking situation. Temple said the University will review the new report and "then make some decisions about what we need to do to take care of the parking problem on this campus."

"It is my intent," Temple went on, "to get this

put together and go to the faculty and students and say 'Okay, here is the problem. Whatever is done about it will have to be financed by fees charged to have vehicles parked on campus. Now what do you want to do about it?'

"It's going to cost more money and it is going to require higher fees," he said. "Of course, one of the alternatives is to ban vehicles from the campus. That doesn't cost any more. But do you want that choice or the choice of paying higher fees?"

"Another idea is to park vehicles away from the campus. But before we can follow through on something like this, we have to be absolutely certain people on campus are going to use this kind of service."

"We need to get this issue resolved and put it into the 'C' budget to be prepared next February. I don't think we can put off forever doing something about parking."

Alonzo G. Squires, director of the Office of Traffic and Motor Vehicle Registration, is a strong advocate of the outlying parking lot plan with a shuttle bus service.

"My feeling has always been," he said, "that the University owns sufficient property away from the campus which could be well-paved, well-fenced, well-lighted, and well-attended, providing spaces to park a majority of the cars on campus."

"The University could lease mini-buses and run them on a regular, frequent schedule. The bus system could be subsidized by a slight increase in each student's fees."

"In the past, students' money has been used to finance all the things which have been done to push students further out. Students have 'bought the bullets to kill themselves' by providing money which has been used to increase faculty and staff lots."

"If the fringe lot was built, I think some of the central campus lots should be filled in and replanted with grass and trees."

Emerson Field, the gravel lot outside of the Student Union, was graded and enlarged this past

summer to provide "temporary" parking facilities. This lot, or at least a portion of it, is being seriously considered as the site of a new dramatic arts building.

When asked about the continued placement of new buildings on existing parking lots, Rutherford replied that "what has fragmented so many campuses has been the difficulty in getting from one place to another when you have a class. When you introduce the automobile into the main part of the campus, you spread the campus further and further out. If you can solve your parking problem in another way, then you can keep your buildings and people close in."

Temple noted that additional parking facilities are being constructed in the health affairs complex and that more are scheduled in that area for next year.

Commenting on the effect these spaces would have on students, Temple said, "Any time you increase the total number of parking spaces on this campus, it has to help students because that makes more spaces available to be assigned to student use."

Rutherford said, "What we have got to do sooner or later — and better sooner — is to face the parking problem fairly, squarely, and head-on. We've got to decide what kind of program we're going to have, what it will cost, who's going to pay what, and who's going to be allowed to do what, and then implement it."

The lack of planning for parking facilities cannot be blamed on any one person or group, however. One University official criticized the Traffic and Safety Committee, noting, "it has met very little during the past two years and there has been no real attempt to tackle the problem at hand."

A former member of the committee commented that often he noticed issues which were not even brought up in the minutes of that meeting.

More than \$30,000 has been spent on parking studies, yet the problem is getting worse, not better.

Mayor Lee said, "Certainly, the University should assume more responsibility for parking cars which are here, now, and begin to determine what limits there are to its growth."

