

Student parking takes a sharp turn as construction shifts parking lots off-campus

MAGGIE HADDOCK

News Staff Writer
mhaddock@unca.edu

Close to 200 campus parking spaces will be permanently relocated off-campus as the construction of new residence halls begins this semester. Three parking lots behind Brown Hall will become inaccessible starting this semester, said Associate Vice Chancellor for Public Safety and Chief of Police Eric Boyce.

"We will be implementing a phase parking process. The phase one timeline will be until May of this year," Boyce said. "The only impacted areas for parking during that time will be P21, P22 and P23, which are right behind Brown Hall coming up the hill on Founders Drive. There are about 155 non-residential spaces that will be affected by that, 22 faculty and staff spaces."

The loss of parking will be accommodated by spaces at the Health and Counseling Center, as well as an adjacent lot referred to as the Vivian Street lot.

"If you go to the traffic circle and look up, there's a road that connects Vivian Street, which is an existing lot that could accommodate about 125 cars that was difficult to get to previously," Boyce said.

Campus parking will shift within the next few months. The current freshmen and residential lots, P1 and P2, will become non-residential lots, while Vivian Street parking will become freshmen and residential lots, Boyce said.

"Our hope is that, the cars that are normally parked and stored here, we're going to move those over to Vivian Street and 118 W.T. Weaver," Boyce said. "Our non-resident students come and go, sometimes several times a day. They're a more fluid, more dynamic group that we want to make sure we have the capacity to accommodate."

Although accommodations for non-residential parking resolve the issues surrounding construction, students such as Justin Sharpe, a sophomore psychology student, face issues with current campus parking.

"I think that it's more impactful than just taking away 30 spots because that's 120 people that are going to have to walk all that way, unless there's a shuttle," Sharpe said. "But a shuttle is still bad with timing because sometimes when you're running late

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or you want to go to class or you're thinking you're going to be on time, it inconveniences you at the expense of the campus."

The university will add another shuttle in accommodation of the new residential lot, Boyce said.

"We will have an express shuttle that will pick them up from P1 and P2, the existing freshmen lot, and take them directly to the Bulldog (statue). It's going to be an express route, you can get there in four minutes, so we feel like we've got a really good plan for our resident students as well and non-resident students," Boyce said.

Although campus construction produces some inconveniences on campus, the issue of parking on campus pre-exists as a problem, Sharpe said.

"Campus parking affects me when I think I'm going to class and I think I'm going to be on time, but I have to park somewhere else, or I have to keep searching or I'm forced to park in a spot where I have to pay a fee because there's no other spot. My education is more important than me not getting a parking spot," Sharpe said.

Non-residential parking on campus means allotting for time to park and then walk to class, Sharpe said.

"Sometimes you have to go very far to the outskirts of campus to find a parking spot and then you have to walk all the way

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PHOTO BY NICK HASELOFF

This is an aerial photo of the faculty parking lot behind Karpen Hall. This lot, along with many others, are expected to congest.