Circulation and Parking Plan for the University of Alaska Fairbanks

Fairbanks, Alaska
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Section 9

Parking System Plan

Parking System Plan

The Campus Master Plan identified fundamental changes in the general organization of the campus, with an emphasis on the locations and scale of, and access to, parking supply. In particular, Action A13 increases parking in the perimeter of campus, with subsequent reduced parking in the interior. Several locations for potential parking structures were identified in the Campus Master Plan. The Plan also notes concerns about the inefficiency of several small parking lots and identified several for possible removal.

While the Campus Master Plan recommends measures to consolidate and relocate some of the parking supply, considerable concern has been expressed, especially among UAF employees, about the lack of convenient parking. These concerns were exacerbated by recent construction activities that temporarily reduced the parking supply in West Ridge. While these spaces are planned to be replaced by Fall 2003, increased development activities are expected to focus new growth in parking demand in the West Ridge area.

These issues clearly point to a need for increased parking supply over time. At the same time, the assessment of current conditions revealed some parking areas that are underutilized during the peak demand period. Given these conditions, and the clear direction given in the Campus Master Plan increase parking in the campus perimeter, the future UAF parking system will increasingly have to rely on efficient management, circulation, and access in order to optimize efficiency and convenience to meet parking needs.

The UAF parking system plan includes parking management measures to increase the overall utilization of the parking supply, coupled with preferred locations for future parking facilities.

Parking Management Designations

The major component of most university parking management programs, including UAF, is the parking permit system. Parking permits provide the means to reserve certain parking areas to specific users, to manage premium parking locations for optimal use, and to differentiate parking areas by appropriate pricing.

The UAF parking permit system provides two basic types of parking permits: general decals and gold decals. During the Spring 2003 semester, there were 5,280 general decals sold for a total of 3,114 general parking spaces. Drivers willing to walk, bike, or take the shuttle can easily find parking in the Taku or Nenana Lots. However, drivers who place a premium on close parking could search for parking in nearly any of the 68 parking lots on the UAF campus, depending on which lots are closest to their destinations.

Modifications to the permit system could be implemented in order to better match the preferences and priorities of the users. Those willing to walk or use the shuttle could have a parking permit at a reduced price, whereas those who value convenience could pay additional for closer parking. The reduced price for shuttle service lots would support the Campus Master Plan goal of shifting parking to the perimeter by providing a pricing incentive to users. Discounted pricing could also be used to get better utilization of existing facilities by making underutilized lots more desirable. Note that the different pricing levels for parking permits should not correspond to a safety or security differential. Safety and security are obligations in all parking areas. Nearly all college and university campuses have designated parking facilities for students, typically preserving the most convenient spaces for staff and faculty. UAF is unusual in that it makes no provision to provide preferential parking locations for faculty and/or staff. This is entirely a campus decision and would not in itself impact the effectiveness of the parking decal program. Instead, the main elements of the program are decal pricing, the amount of available parking, and their locations. If parking areas are made available to the general population, then the price differential between students and staff/faculty should be minimized or eliminated.

Recommended Parking Designations

The following parking permit types are identified to optimize the use of the parking system:

Premium Parking

Premium permits would be a modified version of the current Gold permit and would designate the most convenient parking locations at higher prices than other designations. Most universities would reserve premium parking locations for faculty and staff. This, however, is not necessary if UAF chooses to make premium permits available to the general campus population.

Unlike the current Gold permit system, premium permits would not designate a specific space for an individual user. This practice has led to inefficiency in the current system, with only 50% utilization of the most convenient spaces during the peak hour. Instead, premium permits would be made area-specific and lot-specific where needed. Premium

lots could also be made available for long-term (two or more hours) visitor parking with special visitor permits. In general, premium parking lots should be managed to relatively low peak hour utilization of approximately 70% to 80% in order to ensure availability to permit holders.

Premium decals would still be the most expensive, but significantly reduced from the current Gold decal. Pricing in the range of $250 to $400 should be considered, depending on demand and revenue requirements. Parking Services would likely have to tweak the pricing over time, as demand becomes clear.

General Parking

The largest single designation for parking would be general parking. General permits would be priced lower than premium lots, but would not preclude the possibility of walking from parking to many destinations. General parking would be managed to achieve approximately 90% utilization during the peak hour.

It is expected that the pricing of the general permits would be consistent with the current decal pricing. Again, if students and staff/faculty have equal access to general parking areas, the price differential should be minimized or eliminated.

Economy Parking

Economy permits can be an effective means to get the most out of perimeter parking areas. Parking lots that are currently underutilized could be designated economy lots to provide a lower cost alternative for students on campus that rarely drive their cars or for off-campus students who don't mind parking is a few designated perimeter lots. The economy designation will free up more desirable spaces on-campus for more intensive use and turnover. However, in order for economy lots to be effective, they must be supported by proper infrastructure (plug-ins) and access (shuttle, bike/pedestrian facilities). If plug-ins are not provided, then the economy lots will not adequately serve the students who want to park and leave their cars for extended periods of time. Economy parking should be very low cost, possibly on the order of half the cost of the general permit.

Residential Parking

Residential permits could be offered at a very low cost and would be strictly limited to parking areas at the residential site. This designation is especially appropriate for those residential parking areas that are not well suited to general campus users, such as Hess Village or Columbia Circle. It may be necessary to increase shuttle service to the residential area in order to make this a viable option.

Residents should have the option of getting one of the standard permit designations. However, the residential permit would be issued to encourage resident students/staff to leave their cars at home instead of driving onto campus. Also, residents who do not have adjacent residential parking facilities (such as Wickersham

Hall residents) should be provided economy parking at residential rates, if requested.

Visitor Parking

The need to better provide short-term parking was identified in the Campus Master Plan (Action A14), as well as in community meetings. Visitor parking should be provided in close proximity to major attractors. Other than the Museum, most visitor parking may best be operated with short-term parking meters. Designated parking should be provided for the Museum in order to limit the difficulty for visitors. Visitors on official business that need access to general facilities should also be allowed at the approval of the University to obtain a one-day pass which will allow them to utilize the premium or general lots throughout the campus.

Different types of visitors have different needs for parking:

- All-day Visitors: These visitors need to stay all day on-campus and need access to parking while they are on-campus. For these visitors, the University should provide a permit that allows the visitor to park in the general or premium lots.
- General Visitors: These visitors come to campus to visit or meet with students and staff, or use recreational facilities. These stays are usually one hour or two. These visitors will be able to utilize 2-hour parking meters.
- Short-Term Visitors: These visitors need parking for loading and unloading as well as short errands and can often be accommodated by short duration parking meters in select locations. For example, 10- or 30-minute parking meters would accommodate short errands to the Post Office or UAF parking services, or passenger loading/unloading at large resident halls. These should be available to all users, whether or not they have UAF affiliated decals.

While meters can be an important source of revenue, the main purpose of using meters is to increase parking turnover and aid in enforcement of time limits. Meter rates should be high enough to be a disincentive for the regular campus population to use during classes. Hourly rates of $0.50 may be an appropriate start. For very short term parking, it may be desired to provide a short time stay (10 or 15 minutes) with no charge. The maximum time designation for meters should also be set to a maximum of two hours with some 30-minute meters near high-turnover locations such as the bookstore. Visitors requiring more than two hours should obtain a visitor parking pass for either the premium or general lots.

Installing a coordinated signing plan directing visitor traffic to and clearly identifying visitor parking areas is a priority recommendation. A signage concept plan is provided in the signage and way-finding section of this plan.

Recommended Near-Term Parking Designations

A proposed near-term parking management plan using the parking designations described above is shown in Figure 14. It is expected that Parking Services would monitor and modify the arrangement of parking designations over time. The plan does not include “nondiscretionary” spaces that are unavailable for general use, such as handicapped, loading zones, facilities services, and authorized vehicle spaces. These will need to be incorporated based on identified legal and operating requirements, and

should be determined by facilities and parking managers.

The proposed parking designation plan is summarized in Chart 3 for comparison to the existing parking designations. The chart shows that while general parking would remain the predominant type, there would be increases in the numbers of premium, economy, residential, and visitor spaces. Non-discretionary spaces include handicapped, facilities services, police/fire, and others that will be assigned by parking managers based on specific needs.

Chart 3. Current and Proposed Parking Stall Types

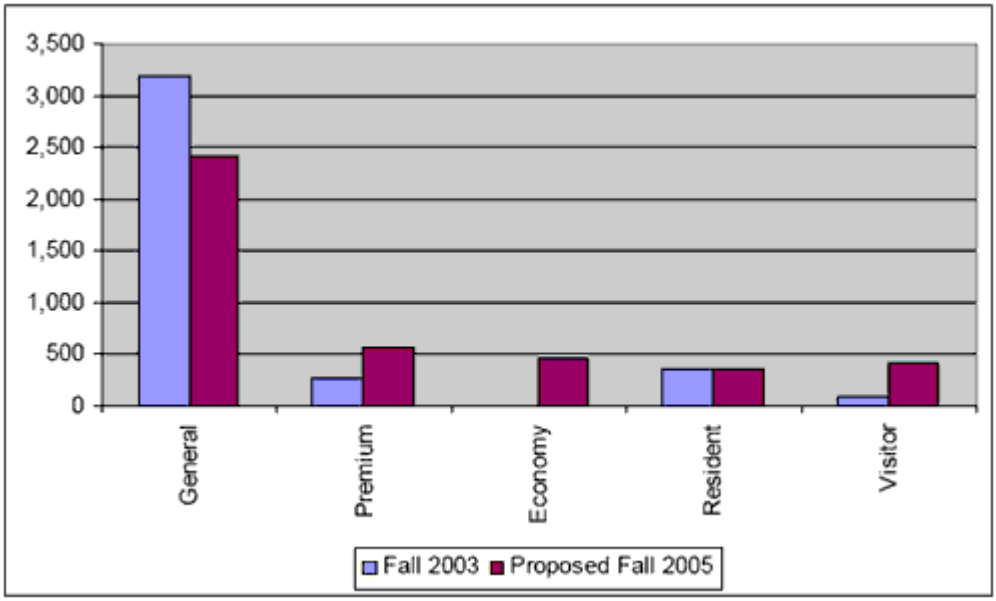
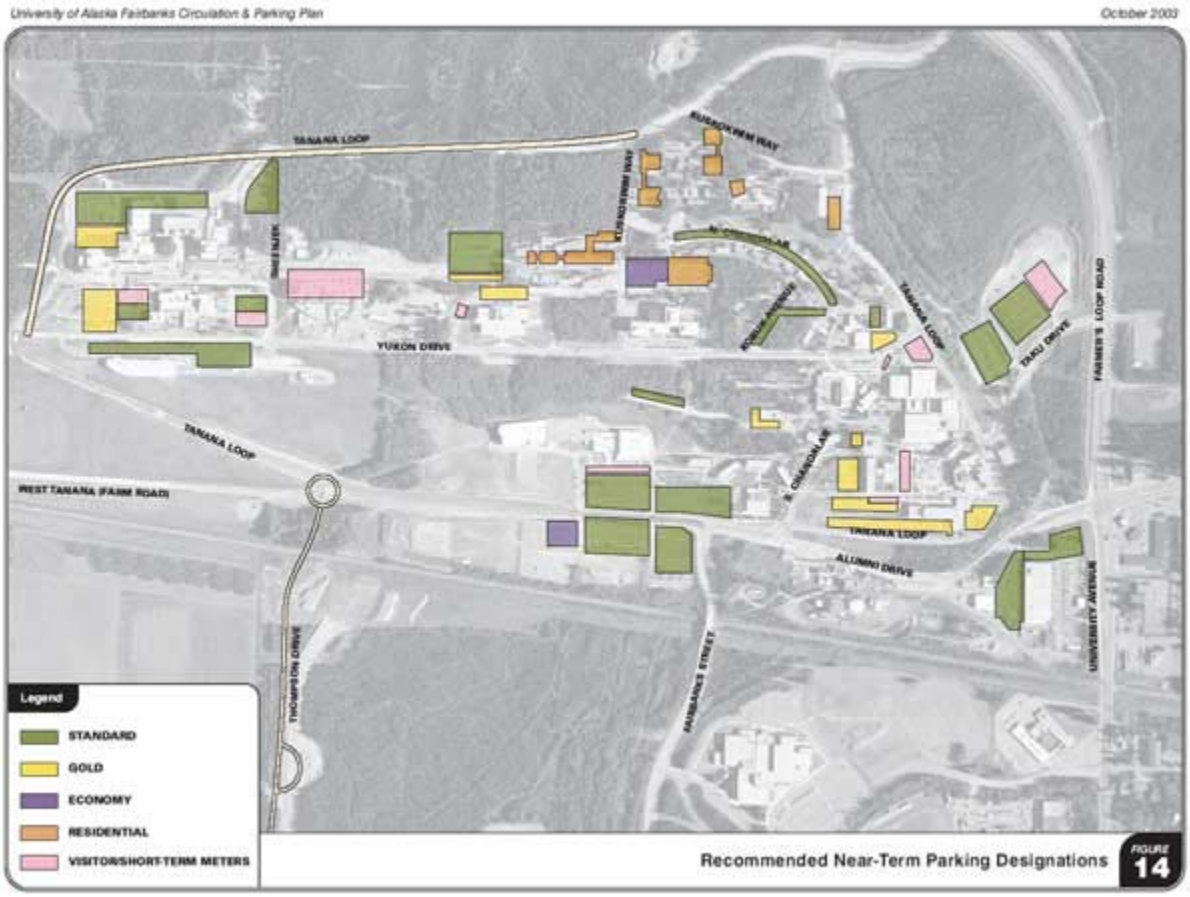


Figure 14: Recommended Near-Term Parking Designations

(larger map)



Additional Parking Management Considerations

Other consideration should be given to special user groups with specific parking needs or other characteristics.

Part-Time Commuter Students

The Campus Master Plan also identifies the need to serve part-time commuter students. Part-time students often arrive on campus after most convenient parking areas are full and tend to have relatively short visits of one to three hours.

One option for serving part-time commuter students would be to require special decals that would allow parking in designated locations not open to the general student population. Meters could be installed with parking rates that are high enough to discourage resident and other full-time students. However, reserving parking for part-time commuters could result in inefficient parking utilization, and allowing them to use metered spaces would reduce availability for visitors.

It is recommended that part-time commuter students work within the existing student parking system with a reduced price for the parking decal, as is currently the case. Access for all user groups on campus should make easy and timely access from parking to campus buildings a priority.

Carpool Parking

UAF currently does not offer reduced parking fees for carpool users. Many campuses and downtowns have found that carpooling can be encouraged by offering reduced fees or premium parking locations. While carpool permits would be expected to comprise a small portion of the overall parking system, they can be an effective incentive to reduce single-occupancy-vehicles.

Community Permits

UAF allows non-UAF affiliated community members to purchase membership to use the SRC facilities. A $20 fee is charged at the time the contract is arranged which allows parking in the Patty Center lot only. There is no renewal requirement for the parking permit. This should be modified to require regular permit renewals and a time limitation for parking should be implemented to ensure commuter students do not park at the Patty Center and Nenana Parking Lots. As an alternative, some metered parking could be used at SRC for infrequent users. With the use of meters, the amount that individuals pay for parking would directly correlate with their use of the facilities.

No Over-Night Parking Areas

Overnight parking restrictions should be considered to discourage residential parking in prime locations. Adequate parking must be provided in other locations, including electric hook-ups, prior to implementing this restriction. The following locations are recommended for the overnight parking restriction:

- SRC and Patty Center lots
- All Lower Campus lots
- Lot G in front of the MBS Complex

Long-Term Parking System Management

Over time, Parking Services will need to monitor parking demand and may need to shift designations, and/or modify supporting shuttle services. Periodic utilization studies should be conducted to evaluate conditions in comparison to the target utilization level for each area. This will provide an objective measure of parking operations, and reduce reliance on user perceptions to identify deficiencies. However, input from users will continue to provide guidance toward modifications in other aspects of the parking system.

In the long-term, site-specific parking permit designations will depend on locations of future parking facilities. Nearly all of the lots identified for premium permits are being considered for removal or redevelopment. These spaces will have to be replaced, either in other convenient locations (likely structured), or in periphery lots with supporting shuttle service. Several of the circulation options identified in this report will have impacts on suitability of parking supply locations and designations. However, future parking should be planned with anticipation of higher reliance on the shuttle system and greater integration with all circulation modes.

Parking Supply Recommendations

Increased efficiency of existing parking facilities is the first priority of the parking system plan. Nevertheless, there will be a need to develop additional parking facilities in the future in order to accommodate anticipated population growth and to replace parking that may be removed for redevelopment. Table 8 summarizes the combination of growth and replacement parking for each of the major activity areas.

The first column identifies the 2010 Background Deficit or Surplus, which is reproduced from Table 6 of the parking assessment. This column identifies the future parking surplus or deficit based on anticipated demand and known changes in supply (primarily in West Ridge). The second column identifies those existing parking lots identified in the Campus Master Plan for potential removal, either due to redevelopment or in keeping with Action A13, to eliminate small lots in the campus core. This column is reproduced from Table 5 of the parking assessment. The 2010 Net Parking Surplus/(Deficit) shows the future parking needs to accommodate both growth in demand as well as replacement of the potentially removed parking lots.

In addition to the future background and net parking supply conditions, Table 8 identifies the total square footage of parking surface needed based on an estimated 350 square feet per parking stall. The table also identifies options for meeting the future deficits. For instance, the 355-space deficit in West Ridge could be accommodated through a combination of new parking in the periphery and increased use of the Nenana Parking Lots, whereas for Lower Commons, forecast parking deficits would need to be accommodated by increased peripheral parking or structured parking.

As shown in Table 8, the combination of anticipated UAF population growth and redevelopment of existing parking facilities would result in a need to build about 900 parking spaces in order to achieve an 80% campus-wide utilization level. This assumes that parking demand is effectively diverted to utilize existing surpluses, especially in the Nenana and Taku Lots. Assuming 350 square feet per stall would be needed, this would be equivalent to approximately 313,000 square feet, or approximately seven acres of parking area.

Table 8: Future Parking Development Required

Location	2010 Background (Deficit)/ Surplus (Table 6)	Potential Parking to be Removed (Table 5)	2010 Net Parking Surplus/ (Deficit)	Maximum Total Square Footage	Parking Development Options
West Ridge	(355)	0	(355)	124,250	Periphery & Nenana Lot
Residential Area	(85)	55	(140)	49,000	Tanana/ Kuskokwim & Hess Commons Lot; Taku & Nenana lots
Lower Campus	(205)	350	(555)	194,250	Structured or Periphery;

					increased Taku use
Recreational Area	(35)	0	(35)	12,250	Accommodated in Nenana
Natural Science	(55)	0	(55)	19,250	Periphery
Ballaine/Taku Lots	170	0	170	0	Increased use by Lower Campus
Peripheral*	150	0	150	0	Increased use as appropriate
Total	**415**	**405**	**(820)**	313,000	Mostly Peripheral
* Peripheral areas include the Facilities Services, Administrative Services, and UPark.					

As the required surface area dedicated to parking increases, there will be increased pressure to shift parking to peripheral locations. This is consistent with Campus Master Plan goals and will increase the reliance on effective and efficient campus circulation, especially on the shuttle. In addition, it is likely that more consideration will be given to building parking garages in order to reduce total land requirements for parking.

Figure 15 shows potential locations for future parking development along with an estimate of the number of spaces that could be provided. Two categories of potential parking sites are shown. New parking facilities would be independent lots or structures developed specifically for the purpose of parking. In addition, several locations are identified for future parking as components of mixed-use facilities. In particular, the existing Eielson South and Bunnell South lots were identified in the Campus Master Plan as potential future building sites. Their inclusion in Figure 15 represents a recommendation to include at least one level of parking as part of the new building development. Similarly, the Campus Master Plan identified the Ballaine Lot as a potential structured parking facility, which would be developed along with non-parking uses.

In total, the parking sites shown in Figure 15 would accommodate more than 2,000 additional parking spaces. This exceeds the amount identified in Table 8, but they have been identified in order to provide flexibility in planning to ensure that parking development best suits other campus development priorities.

Lower Campus Parking Issues

As the historic campus core, Lower Campus is the location of most general academic and administrative functions at UAF. The numerous small parking lots that have long served Lower Campus were identified in the Campus Master Plan for potential removal. In total, approximately 350 out of the existing 750 spaces could be removed either for future building development or under the Campus Master Plan Action 13.

Generally speaking, UAF should consider the following options with respect to future parking development for Lower Campus:

- Provide parking within structures to serve Lower Campus. These could be provided in

parking levels in conjunction with future classroom and administrative buildings.

- Provide all replacement spaces in the campus perimeter (mostly Tanana Loop) with an understanding that some staff and faculty will have a much lower level of service with respect to parking.
- Reconsider some of the proposed parking removals on Lower Campus.

Given that Lower Campus has relatively high parking utilization at present (non-restricted spaces were over 90% utilized in the peak hour), UAF should be proactive in addressing issues related to the potential removal of more than half of the existing parking supply.

Figure 15: Future Potential Parking Sites (larger map)