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COMMUNITY FORUM NEWSLETTER

NEXT COMMUNITY FORUM MEETING:

July 8, 2010, 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

MATTSSON BOARD ROOM

540 ARAPEEN DRIVE

Free parking is available directly west of the building.

AGENDA:

- Update on University Street project
- Trails update from the Utah Museum of Natural History

Note: One or two additional discussion items will be added closer to the date. Please watch for updates on www.unews.utah.edu/?action=neighbors

The following items were discussed at the April 8, 2010 Community Forum:

COMMUTER SERVICES UPDATE

ALMA ALLRED, DIRECTOR, COMMUTER SERVICES, U OF U

Van pool program. About four years ago, Utah Transit Authority (UTA) contacted the U about creating a van pool program. UTA didn't have vans available at that time, but they are now in the process of matching people who travel to and from the U more than 400 miles per month. It is hoped that each van pool will take 10-12 cars off campus. Commuters from Summit County, Box Elder County, and other outlying areas are being matched. The van pool service can be paid for by a simple payroll deduction, estimated to be about \$50 per month if the van is driven approximately 600 miles per month with 12 people in the van pool. Allred is not aware of other universities that have adopted this type of system because of the nature of schedules at universities—not a lot of people start and stop at the same time.

U Car Share. The U Car Share program—open to faculty, staff, students, and the larger community—allows members (it's free to join at www.ucarshare.com) to reserve a car on an hourly basis for \$4.99/hour. Since the program was initiated last fall, statistics show that one of the four cars on campus is rented on average 44 times per week.

Parking. About 20 years ago, there were approximately 18,000 permitted parking spaces on campus. Now, there are 12,344, including hospital parking. Even though there are now a lot more students, faculty, and staff, there is only a 76 percent occupancy rate for those spaces—clear evidence that fewer people are driving to campus.

Campus shuttles. The U is still averaging about 43,000 campus shuttle riders per week. The program is expensive (\$1 per passenger on main campus and \$11 per passenger to Research Park), but it is an essential incentive to get people to leave their cars at home. On a 1,400 acre campus, if shuttles are not provided, people will either use their cars or not come. A more cost-efficient shuttle system would use vehicles powered by clean natural gas (CNG). About 12 years ago, the U purchased two CNG shuttle buses but they lacked power. This year, two new CNG shuttles are working so well that the U will likely transform the entire fleet of 18 diesel shuttles to CNG over a five to six year period. One reason it will take this long is that the University will need to build a natural gas fueling station on campus. It takes a long time to fill a shuttle tank with natural gas—about six to eight hours. An on-campus facility would allow the U to fuel vehicles at night. There are a lot of environmental reasons to go to CNG, but it would also save the U money. Currently, natural gas costs approximately \$.76/gallon.



What is the frequency of campus shuttles? Could they all go in one direction?

We have some shuttles that are full all the time, and others that aren't. Ridership numbers depend on which route the shuttle is taking. In the areas that don't get as much usage, services are reduced, but Commuter Services still tries to get them around those areas at least three times per hour. Most of the shuttles go in loops so it's important that they don't all go in the same direction, since that would be problematic for those going just a short way in the opposite direction.



<http://unews.utah.edu/?action=neighbors>

For more information or to be added to or deleted from our mailing list, call 801-585-9244.

BETA THETA PI

JAY WILGUS, ASSISTANT DEAN OF STUDENTS, U OF U

The national Beta Theta Pi fraternity and alumni association jointly decided to suspend its local charter due to displeasure with the “product” that the chapter was putting out. Fraternities and sororities aim to help men and women develop character and leadership skills. The national organization told the University that there were many incidents in which the local chapter failed to comply or communicate with the national organization, had alcohol and drug issues, and had committed a variety of infractions over the past six years. This temporary suspension is an attempt to “wipe the slate clean.” Beta Theta Pi is in the process of a significant fund-raising campaign to renovate the chapter house to the standards they’d like and that would attract the caliber of students they desire. In fall 2011 the renovation will be completed and they will begin recruiting residents for the spring 2012 semester.

Will the renovation be treated as a project that goes through the city’s requirements for remodeling?



Yes; they are required to get permits for the work they do just as any other city resident would. They have already begun working with people at the city to get that process underway.

UNIVERSITY STREET PROJECT

TIM HARPST, TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR, SLC
DAN BERGANTHAL, TRANSPORTATION ENGINEER, SLC

Salt Lake City (SLC) is making inroads in pedestrian/ bike safety, and is furthering the city’s master plan. One project to that end, which has been scheduled for some time, is a resurfacing and restriping project on University Street from 200 South to 400 South. The restriping may also include the block from 100 South to 200 South in order to provide extended bicycle lanes. This bike route has been on the city’s master plan since 1993.

The city expects the project, which is scheduled for early summer, to be completed within two to three weeks. They are currently collecting data to determine the best configuration to accommodate the bicycle lanes as well as bus stops and crosswalks. The volume of traffic along that stretch of road is fairly low (5,000 vehicles per day compared with between 13,000 and 20,000 on 1300 East). The city feels that this volume

can be accommodated with the options they are considering. They are working with UTA and the University to arrive at the best plan for buses along that route including shelters and pull outs. In addition, the city council is looking into changing a city ordinance that would allow specific businesses to maintain certain bus shelters, including trash collection, in exchange for ad space. Bus shelters near the University may be good candidates for this type of endeavor. Neighbors can be assured that SLC will invite public comment if they pursue the idea of shelters and will not make any changes to the road until they feel it works for residents, businesses, and the University.

Could a similar project be undertaken along University Street between South Temple and 100 South?



University Street narrows along that block and doesn’t allow room to accommodate a bike lane unless parking on the west side of the street is removed, which would create a problem for those who visit the park and need to be able to park their vehicle. SLC will look into what could be done at that location.

What is the property owners’ involvement? Will they be notified of meetings?



The city will notify property owners of any public meetings and welcomes feedback from residents.

What is the funding source?



City money that has been set aside for road maintenance as well as a capital improvement fund will be used for this project.

What is in the SLC Master Plan for bikes entering campus via Foothill Blvd., Sunnyside Ave., or Wasatch Blvd.?



There are bike lanes on Guardsman Way and Wakara Way and a north/south path to University Street off of Foothill Blvd. is proposed. There are also bike lanes proposed on 800 East, 900 East, and 1100 East along Sunnyside Avenue. Wherever there is a resurfacing project planned, the city will consider restriping the road for better pedestrian and bike safety.

Has the restriping of 1300 East between 500 and 2100 South been successful?



Yes; this is surprising because there was a lot of public resistance to the project when it was first proposed. A lot of people thought the purpose of the project was to put in the bike lane, but it was actually a result of an audit done by residents and experts charged with determining safety improvements for pedestrians along that street. The street was originally a state highway managed by the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), and was transferred to Salt Lake City two years ago. “Hawk beacons” – the first of their kind in the state – have been installed. They make it possible for pedestrians to stop the flow of traffic when they want to cross the street. Traffic flow resumes thereafter.

The highest volume of traffic was found on the narrowest section of 1300 East. The restriping of the street to one lane in each direction and a center turn lane has allowed a better traffic flow and made a bike lane possible on the north end. The city also expects traffic accidents to decrease along that stretch of road. It usually takes about three years for enough data to make a determination. While the configuration of University Street will not be the same as that of 1300 East, the city hopes the new striping and bike lanes will have similar success.

Salt Lake City hopes to get federal funding in the future to rebuild 1300 East north of 500 South to South Temple. If this happens, the city will take the opportunity to move curbs and redefine parking to support some of the businesses in that area.

Is the amount of traffic and reduced speed limit on 1300 East actually helping with traffic flow?



SLC dropped the speed limit by five miles per hour in that area and re-timed the traffic lights. These differences seem to have created a more orderly flow, but there has been no reduction in volume during peak periods. This is probably best, because SLC did not want to divert traffic into residential areas. The traffic along 1500 East dropped 40 percent when light rail was installed. Some of that volume may be coming back a little. Salt Lake City Transportation Division will look into the following suggested improvements for pedestrians and report at a future Community Forum meeting:

- Install a traffic signal with a red turn arrow at the intersection of South Campus Drive and University Street and add a diagonal crosswalk at that intersection to make it clear to pedestrians when and in what direction they can safely cross the street.
- Add bolder striping at the crosswalks along University Street.

For questions about the University Street striping design, contact Becka Roof, Salt Lake City bicycle/pedestrian coordinator, at (801) 535-6630 or bikeslc@slcgov.com. For questions about the repaving project schedule, contact John Coyle, project manager, at (801) 535-6241 or john.coyle@slcgov.com.

Are there any more specific plans to deal with the traffic on Foothill Blvd.?



The study of Foothill Blvd. by UDOT did not result in any clear conclusions. We will invite someone from UDOT to provide an update on the study at a future Community Forum.

UPCOMING ON CAMPUS

Red Butte Garden’s summer concert line-up is amazing! Although some shows are sold out, many are not. Here’s a partial list of those still open. A complete list is online at www.redbuttegarden.org or call (801) 585-0556.

July 7
Joan Baez with Guy Clark

July 13
Bare Naked Ladies with Kris Allen

August 1
Mary Chapin Carpenter

August 22
A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor