

# Transportation Alternatives Board (TAB) 2004-05 Recommendations

August 8th, 2005

To: Chancellor Henry Yang

From: Bruce Tiffney, Chair, Transportation Alternatives Board

Subject: Annual Report of the Chancellor's Advisory Transportation Alternatives Board, 2004-2005.

The Chancellor's Advisory Transportation Alternatives Board (TAB) met nine times during the 2004-2005 Academic year. Each meeting including time for public comment, reports from associated campus interests and Transportation and Parking Services and active review and development of suggested policy by the board.

## **Report:**

TAB was delighted to assist director Tom Roberts and his staff of Transportation and Parking Services (TPS) to bring to fruition the initial stages of the integrated Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) in the Spring of 2005. Using a single magnetic and programmed swipe card, members of TAP (who by definition do not possess a standard parking permit) have access to:

- Free faculty and staff bus trips between home and campus;
- 57 free hours of parking per quarter using In-vehicle parking meters that monitor parking (up to the limit) on a real-time basis;
- Ability to use pay stations to access parking slots beyond the 57 hours of free parking as necessary (To be implemented Fall, 2006);
- UCSB car-share vehicles for 120 minutes at a time;
- Transportation to and from the Goleta train station for rail commuters;
- Discounts for carpool and vanpool riders;
- Access to bike lockers;
- Guaranteed ride home.

As a result of these innovations, faculty and staff enrollment in the TAP program has grown by 223 participants or an astounding 26% since April first.

These changes represent a major step forward from previous thinking, and place UCSB at the lead of innovative transportation solutions among all UC campuses and indeed in the nation.

However, these advances represent but a start, and much remains to be done, particularly in addressing the needs of commuters from communities north and south of Santa Barbara. These concerns, plus others of a more local nature, have occupied the Board during the present year.

Specific items of consideration and resulting recommendations included:

- TAB reviewed a phone-activated, web-based application for matching passengers to drivers in a car-pool situation. This system (which is locally-developed) needs the support of a large employer like UCSB to approach SBCAG for funding for a feasibility study. This mechanism has been implemented elsewhere and has promise for UCSB, but issues surrounding liability and a guaranteed ride home need to be resolved.
- TAB established a link with the Transportation Group Study Project in Environmental Studies. This group seeks to define existing benchmarks in alternative transportation against which our future gains in this field may be measured.

- Together with the City of Santa Barbara Council Member Helene Schneider, UCSB sponsored a meeting of local employers and city and county officials at Faculty Club to discuss the impact of, and possible solutions to, the challenge of a commuting work force. Presentations on housing on the South Coast (Bill Watkins; Director of UCSB's Economic Forecast Project and Ron Werft; Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital) pointed up the growing need to ensure employees could commute to Santa Barbara with relative ease. In response, TPS Director Roberts and Greg Hart from the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) presented existing and proposed solutions, ranging from the standard (enlarge 101) to the far-sighted (develop alternative transportation and rail connections).

- TAB recommended that Associate Vice Chancellor David Gonzales represent UCSB to the board of COAST (Coalition for Sustainable Transportation), and we look forward to coordinating with COAST in coming years on matters of alternative transportation.

- After considerable discussion, TAB recommended that TAP manage access to 20 bicycle lockers to be made available to students, faculty and staff through a lottery process that will ensure proportional access to all groups, including some from within a two-mile radius of campus. It is our intent that the fees from this program be used to expand it until it reaches the necessary "carrying capacity" to deal with demand. The possibility exists that a further 32 lockers may become available in the near future, once properly refurbished. This undertaking was integrated into the larger Transportation Alternatives Program.

- TPS had originally applied for a grant from SBCAG to fund car share vehicles through a Federal grant designed to mitigate air quality. These latter funds were pulled by federal mandate, leaving this project in limbo. TAB then recommend to TPS that TAP funds be used to rent three hybrid gas/electric vehicles from Transportation Services for the car share program on a monthly basis until such time as other grant sources could be identified, or the TAP budget could afford to buy the cars outright. (TPS explored the use of older UCSB fleet vehicles for this purpose, but they were not compatible with the information systems necessary to run car share).

- TAB recommended that TPS arrange for a shuttle to meet two arriving Amtrak trains and three departing trains on weekdays at Goleta Station, starting in January 2005. TAB recommended that this service be tracked to determine its efficacy in serving employees who use the train to commute to work.

- TAB recommended that a central bicycle planning process be set up on campus. It was clear from an unfortunate incident resulting from construction of the KITP and MRL additions that planning for bicycle circulation was not being carried out in a pro-active way. After the period of inconvenience that occurred at the east entrance to campus, TAB wants to be certain that a similar error does not occur with the construction of graduate residences. To this end, the chair of TAB met with the Design Review Committee, resulting in a clear plan that will permit free and safe bicycle circulation during the full construction process.

An unresolved problem involves the suggestion by the architects of the campus master plan that the Pardall Tunnel be eliminated and replaced by grade crossings. Bicycle users on campus unanimously feel that this will lead to accidents and fatalities. Discussion on this matter will carry into the next year.

- TAB recommended that the TPS charges for citation fees from parking violations be aligned with those of the surrounding city and county jurisdictions.

- TAB recommended that a member of TAB should also be a member of AS Bikes to ensure communication.

- TAB reviewed a presentation by Professor Richard Church (Department of Geography). In the Spring of 2004, his research group conducted a survey and established a GIS summary of the distribution of UCSB faculty, staff and students in the greater Santa Barbara area. Many of these people do not use public transit because it is not convenient (when the bus requires 2.5 times as long or longer than driving, few commuters will use public transit).

This is an important study, as knowledge of the distribution of potential commuters will enable UCSB to effectively argue for express buses and altered bus routes on the basis of a known population seeking rides at specific times. We recommended that these data be shared with MTD, and perhaps augmented by data from other large local employers, to create an effective planning base for bus commuting.

- At our final meeting of the year, we reviewed and approved the proposed budget for 2005-2006.

#### **Future Year's Work.**

These are good beginnings, but they are just that. Incomplete data suggest that there are at least 400 employees commuting to UCSB from Ventura and points south and nearly that number from the north—this says nothing of student commuters. Closer to campus, no arrangements have been made with local governments to develop bicycle commuting, and further research is required to make bus travel both more efficient and enticing. Goals for the coming years include, but are not limited to the following.

#### Major Projects:

- Requiring immediate attention in the Fall of 2005 is the use of the Clean Air Express (CAE) by employees coming from the north. CAE is asking for a UCSB subsidy of \$14,000/year to support this service. However, CAE's UCSB riders complain that CAE's schedule is not compatible with their work day, and that drop off and pick-up points are inconvenient. Commuting from the north is further exacerbated by the recent state decision to discontinue the use of 15 passenger vans for van pools, requiring that 12 passenger vans be used instead. These vans would have to be purchased by UCSB, and would cost considerably more to run than the 15-passenger vans, increasing overall van pool costs.

Given these changes, TAB needs to examine all of the costs involved in several alternatives to moving employees in from the north, including the CAE, 12-passenger van pools, and leased buses or UCSB operated buses.

- Concomitant with this, TAB needs to spend more time studying and perhaps promoting flex-time and telecommuting among UCSB employees, in order to support those employees using mass transit or alternative transportation. This undertaking in particular should be coordinated with the recently established program on campus sustainability.

- TAB needs to work with MTD on several levels.

- 1) To integrate their projected Camino Real Marketplace Shuttle (starting in the Fall of 2006) into a larger plan that might work as a defacto campus shuttle. At present this is scheduled to run between western UCSB, Isla Vista and the Camino Real Marketplace. TAB should open a dialog to explore (a) extending the MTD route to the east side of campus, preferably to the UCEN), (b) providing it an adequate place in which to turn around on the east side and (c) doubling the current frequency of buses to a 7 minute headway.
- 2) Perhaps in conjunction with studies done in the Department of Geography, TAB needs to enter a long-term dialog with MTD to develop routes that, while answering the needs of the community as a whole, also most effectively answer the needs of UCSB travelers.
- 3) TAB and MTD need to discuss how to allow more bicycle commuters to use MTD buses, either via larger bike racks on buses, or by having dedicated "bike-only" buses at peak hours.
- 4) TAB Needs to explore the possibility that the Downtown-UCSB express buses from downtown might stop at 5 Points/La Cumbre to and from campus.

- TAB needs to build on the momentum started with the meeting of concerned employers at the Faculty Club. Follow-up letters and conversations are required to identify common goals and a structure to reach towards those goals. We should invite Councilwoman Helene Schneider in particular to join us in this planning.

One specific suggestion is to create a "test" of the applicability of rail transport from the north using Amtrack through an exemplary "rail to work week".

In concept, this would require all major employers to participate in a “test program” for one week in which driving (and van-pooling?) employees from north and west of campus would use the train. The goal is to see how much money this generates for Amtrack and how the employees enjoy riding rather than driving. If we can demonstrate to Amtrack that this is a moneymaker, and if employees find that they like it, we could then pressure Amtrack to move its service back one hour to capture this market. Similarly, scheduling changes would be needed on their evening run.

This requires

- 1) Establish that it is easy for employees to get to the railhead and help them if it is not.
  - 2) Ensure that they are met and transported from Goleta to UCSB.
  - 3) Because the present Amtrack service from the North arrives at 9:10, allow these workers to start their day at 9:30.
  - 4) Give them transport back to the Goleta station at 5:30 to catch the 5:50.
- The TAP program needs to mount an aggressive sales pitch in the Fall quarter to new and returning students. We need to develop a more visible image to ensure that the campus knows of our services and how easy it is to enroll in them. New brochures are being prepared, but web and other print interfaces should promote TAP and other methods of reducing vehicular traffic at UCSB.
  - A correlated concern is that much of the funding for public transit comes from measure D (half cent sales tax allocation used for transportation). The re-authorization of Measure D will be on November 2006 ballot. We need to initiate a dialog with community transportation partners to create a convincing argument for retaining this measure, well before the ballot deadline.
  - TAB needs pursue the goal of placing bicycle planning under one central governing association, so that bike path construction and maintenance, bicycle parking, access to shower facilities, access to lockers and similar structures, and enforcement of bicycle regulations will all be directed by a single hand. This should commence with a meeting of all concerned parties with the purpose of (1) agreeing on the nature of such a body and (2) establishing its goals in light of the current campus master plan.

#### Secondary Goals:

- We recommend that TAP add a trip calculator to the UCSB TAP website that allows a commuter to calculate the real cost of driving a single occupancy vehicle to campus on a daily basis.
- TAB should work with TPS and Housing & Residential Services explore the possibility of establishing a weekend and holiday shuttle between the dorms and Goleta Station. If effective, this could reduce the number of cars brought to campus by residential students.
- TAB needs to consider that portion of the UCSB staff and faculty who need to drive two days a week, but who otherwise use the bus or some other means to get to campus. At present it is simpler and cheaper for these folk to buy and use a yearly pass. However, could a circumstance be worked out that they are given 57 hours on their in-vehicle meter (like other TAP participants), but can purchase enough hours to bring them up to two days/week at a reduced rate? They would pay the full daily rate for anything beyond two days per week.
- UCSB has several faculty members interested in transportation and surrounding sociological issues. Our commuting problems are shared with those of other academic institutions from Oxnard to San Louis Obispo. It has been suggested that this commonality of interest might be forged into a regional transportation institute based at UCSB and affiliated with the existing UC Multi-campus research unit studying transportation, but with a South Coast emphasis.
- TAB needs to develop consistent and interactive ties with the Campus Sustainability Committee, with whom we share strong interests.

- TAB needs to work to develop an insurance structure that will allow undergraduates to participate in the car-share program.
- TAB should look to other modes of non-traditional transport as a means of alleviating campus congestion, including shuttles (beyond that planned in concert with MTD), Segways, and other modes.

In closing, we wish to extend our deepest appreciation to Mr. Tom Roberts, and to the staff team in TPS whom Tom has energized, for their energy and vision in moving the cause of efficient transportation, and thus the cause of the University, forward. We also wish to single out Ms. Tana Lucido for her unfailing good humor and extraordinary efficiency as a note taker and meeting organizer.

Members:

Marguerite Bouraad-Nash  
Greg Foltz  
Mark Frickel  
Art Gilbert  
Logan Green,  
Steven Gross  
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