City parking permit cost to rise; student fee to more than double

By Melissa K. Sterrett
Lantern staff writer

City parking permits for next school year will cost students more than twice the amount it did this year. The Columbus Division of Traffic Engineering investigated and found the current $10 fee insufficient to cover its costs.

Jim Davis, a parking engineer for the Columbus Division of Traffic Engineering, said the current fee had been in place since 1979, before any passes were distributed. Next year's permits will cost $25.

He said there have been some complaints about the increase, which was enacted citywide in January, and some people decided they needed fewer permits. Students were excluded from the increase until May or September.

"Nobody found out what it was costing the city until last year," Davis said.

Davis said the division added up the cost of the time for technicians, sign crews, administrators and printing bills and found the cost to the city last year was $27 per sticker.

"This should have been done for 11 years," he said.

The investigation began because they were "pretty sure (the cost) was more than $10," Davis said.

Of the 2,300 permits distributed citywide, 1,500 are given in the campus area, Davis said.

The campus area is divided into seven districts, Davis said. A permit is required to park in these districts during certain times.

The parking violations bureau enforces the sticker requirements and the division does not receive money from the tickets, Davis said.

All the money collected from the violations and the permit program comes from the city's general fund. The violations bureau said ticket income is not broken down into districts and is used in the general fund for costs such as the salaries of city employees.

The permits can be obtained by presenting proof of residence, the car's registration and paying the fee, Davis said. The permit may be renewed by mail after the first year if one keeps the same address.

Beware this sign. Parking permits for zones such as these will cost 150 percent more next year than this year. Students wishing to park next to these signs will have to pay $25 of their hard-earned money.
Area parking, trash under city’s scope

For students, the dumpster behind 17th Avenue apartment complex is used by three buildings, sophomore Jodi Singer said.

Singer said she also uses a dumpster behind 17th Avenue who often overflows, causing trash to spread across the property. "Sometimes they overfill and trash is blown across the property," Singer said.

Jim Vudrutsa, junior, said at the 12th Avenue apartment complex, where he lives, there are more cars than there are parking spaces.

Vudrutsa said he has been locked in several times and had to walk to the bottom to get his keys. "It is a major inconvenience," Vudrutsa said.

The other alternative is to park in the street, but that is also a hassle, Vudrutsa said, because it hard to find a spot.

Steve Bole, owner of Soler Properties, thinks his own parking facilities are "inadequate." He said he provides enough dumpsters, but would like to see more cars.

Judith Phillips, assistant property manager of Inn-Town Houses and Apartments, agrees that twice-a-week pickups, especially during move-in time, would be more effective than having extra dumpsters.

She said her company would have a problem adding dumpsters if it is required, but it may cut down the already limited number of parking spaces.

Inn-Town’s dumpsters are not marked, and there are reports of residents from other buildings using their dumpsters, according to Phillips.

But Phillips said she would rather have residents of other buildings use their dumpsters than her.

Mark Beam/The Lantern

After the dumpster in this alley between 13th and 14th Avenues was filled, an overabundance of trash was thrown in the street.

Area parking, trash under city’s scope

In response to complaints from students and residents in the university area, the Columbus City Council in November will address proposed parking changes that would stiffen parking and dumpster regulations for landlords.

The availability of parking spaces and overflowing dumpsters are among the issues which prompted the zoning changes, said Fred Carter, deputy public service director.

The zoning would result in the adjustment of regulations in the university area concerning these issues.

The zoning proposal will go to City Council November 1.

Passed, it would go into effect December 1, Carter said.

The adjusted regulations would only be enforced on buildings constructed after the regulations go into effect, as well as existing buildings undergoing new construction, said Cathy Shaw, planning supervisor for the city’s Development Department.

Under city-wide zoning regulations, property owners must provide their own large-capacity dumpsters for each building with four or more apartment units, Shaw said.

University area regulations will require one-sixth a cubic yard per resident, increasing the capacity requirements, Shaw said.

The plan makes sense because many of the walk-up buildings in an off-campus building have as many as six bedrooms each, said Steve McClary, planning administrator in the Development Department.

"In most areas of the city, that (the existing law) is a sensible requirement," he said. "But four or more units in the university area accommodates 17,000 people.

Besides enforcing the regulations, the city will remove the infamous plastic dumpsters from the university area in November because they are easily moved and vandalized, Carter said.

However, McClary said single families can be exempted from the plan and keep the smaller containers provided in their own.

The proposed changes come "better late than never," said Bob Davis, owner of Barksby Real Estate. He said he has been in close contact with the city for years, trying to make zoning improvements for the entire university area, especially for the adequate provision of trash dumpsters.

Re-zoning also would include changes relating to the number of parking spaces in the number of residents, not units, per building, Shaw said.

City regulations require two spaces per unit. If the zoning changes go into effect, new regulations might require property owners to provide two spaces for every three residents, Shaw said.

The existing requirements for trash dumpsters and parking spaces do cause problems for some

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City issues stickers for area parking

By Rachel Rosko
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Parking spots for students will get even tighter this fall when Columbus launches a resident-only parking system on some streets near campus.

Beginning Autumn Quarter, off-campus parking on some streets in the university area will be restricted by the city of Columbus by allowing only residents who live on those streets to purchase on-street parking permits.

Many students bought off-campus parking permits as an inexpensive alternative to purchase campus parking passes.

Jim Davis, a spokesman for the Columbus Traffic Engineering Division, said the city has separated the off-campus university area into 13 districts. The residents of these districts were given the opportunity to approve the permit-parking proposal by signing petitions.

Twelve of the 13 districts have endorsed the permit proposal and have been approved as restricted on-street parking areas by means of petitions submitted by the residents in the districts, he said.

The districts approved include parts of West 10th, 12th, 13th, 14th and Norwich avenues, and all of 17th and 18th avenues. Only cars bearing an on-street parking permit may park on the streets that correspond with the permits.

These areas will be marked off by street signs, and the restrictions will be enforced during high-traffic hours on weekdays.

The city hopes the permit system will discourage commuter parking, discourage warehousing of vehicles, and encourage the development and use of off-street parking, Davis said.

"(The regulations) would help to give the street back to moving bicycles and pedestrians, and get rid of congestion in residential areas caused by cars," Davis said.

Caleb Brunson, director of OSU Traffic and Parking, said this will definitely increase the sales of on-campus parking stickers, but it will not affect the price of the stickers, which cost $45 for one school year.

Residents who live in restricted areas can obtain a one-year, on-street parking permit downtown for $25.