



May 2, 2024

University of Tennessee, Knoxville Graduate and Professional Students,

This Open Letter on Accessibility in Campus Parking and Transit at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville highlights pressing concerns that have long impacted our campus. These issues are not new but have persisted, significantly affecting the daily lives and experiences of students, faculty, and staff. It is crucial that our leadership and administration address these challenges promptly to foster a safer, more accessible, and inclusive environment for all.

Parking logistics has been a recurring topic of discussion across campus, particularly with regard to limited availability, costs, and safety. The persistent shortage of parking spaces adds significant stress and time constraints to our daily routines. The high costs associated with parking permits place a significant financial burden on graduate students, especially those with limited resources. Finally, safety concerns in parking garages, such as poor lighting, lack of emergency call boxes, and inadequate security patrols, pose risks to the well-being of students, faculty, and staff, particularly during late hours.

The campus also faces challenges, notably the lack of adequate bus stops, the absence of covers and seats at existing stops, and issues with frequency and reliability. These issues contribute to overcrowding, increased wait times, and difficulties in accessing public transportation, especially during peak hours and inclement weather conditions. This lack of infrastructure particularly impacts the safety, comfort, and overall experience of individuals with disabilities. Moreover, restricted operating hours of transit routes limit transportation options for students and staff who may need to travel outside standard hours for work, research, or other commitments, hindering their full participation in campus life and posing risks to their well-being.

Commuting to campus is also a difficult experience for many students, due to the cost associated with Knoxville Area Transit use, as well as related access and safety issues concerning these routes. These issues pose a significant barrier to the viability of use for many students, faculty, and staff. The cost of, connection to, and similar access and safety concerns with local transit options need to be factored in as changes to campus parking and transit systems are considered.

Addressing these multifaceted issues requires a comprehensive approach that prioritizes the diverse needs of our student body and campus community. We urge our leadership to take proactive measures and collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including university administration, transportation authorities, and students, to implement the following recommendations:

- **Explore Parking Capacity:** Utilize alternative parking strategies to alleviate shortages and improve convenience for all.
- **Prioritize Student Access to Parking During Events:** Ensure proper communication regarding events by sharing updates frequently - including but not limited to: parking app push notifications, a weekly newsletter, and lot signage day before and day of event. In addition to lots designated for event attendees, parking attendants should monitor the lots set aside for student parking during events as well to ensure that event attendees are not using student-reserved spaces.

- **Enhance Infrastructure at Bus Stops:** Improve accessibility and infrastructure at bus stops to accommodate diverse needs and improve the overall transit experience.
- **Advocate for Affordability:** Champion affordable parking permits and transit fares, alongside exploring financial assistance programs to support students facing economic challenges.
- **Extend Transit Route Hours:** Work towards extending transit operating hours to meet the diverse schedules and transportation needs of our community.
- **Enhance Safety Measures:** Implement increased lighting, emergency call boxes, and regular security patrols in parking garages to ensure a secure environment for all users.
- **Advocate for the increased investment into public transportation** for all of Knoxville to ensure students, faculty, and staff, as well as the Knoxville community at large, have effective access to campus and to the resources in our city.

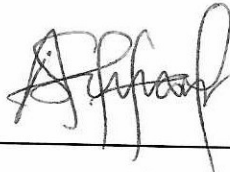
By implementing these recommendations and fostering collaboration and open communication, we can create a more accessible, efficient, and inclusive parking and transit system that benefits everyone on campus.

Thank you,

Graduate Student Senate

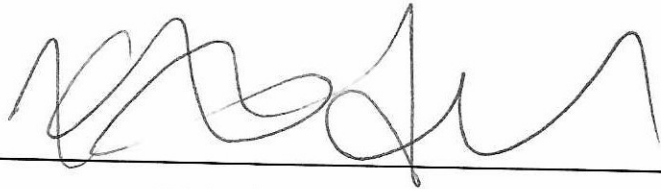
Graduate Student Senate
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Adopted by the Graduate Student Senate of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville on the second of May in the year two thousand and twenty-four.



Samuel Affar
Senate Chair

The Graduate Student Senate of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, President, does hereby approve / [] refuse to approve this resolution.



Katherine Trubee
President

5/2/24

Date