

## **OCL Study Session, September 16, 2015: How CNY Moves to Jobs - Employers**

SUNY Oswego Metro Center

Co-chairs: Heidi Holtz and Mary Kate Intaglietta;

OCL: Sandra Barrett and Renée K. Gadoua

Panel:

- Tom Pelis, AVP, Facilities and Planning, Upstate Medical University
- Mario Colone, program manager, Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council
- Scot Vanderpool, Manager, Parking & Transit, Syracuse University
- Melissa Cadwell, Sustainability Division, Syracuse University

Session began with guest appearance of two men (Mark Zillig and John Porter) who were riding hoverboards near Clinton Square. Heidi Holtz invited them to describe how they use the boards.

The men called them “the wave of the future” and said the devices are like Segways (“the human transporter) without the stick. Hoverboards cost about \$500. They take three hours to charge, and the charge lasts 10 hours. One of the men said he and his girlfriend used them while attending the state fair. They have non-inflatable tires. They’re supposed to work on all terrains, but, “they’re not too good in snow.”

### **I. Mario Colone, SMTC, provided an overview of [Downtown Syracuse Transportation Demand Management \(TDM\) Study 2011](#).**

--Goal: to reduce employment parking demand

--From report: TDM is defined as a wide range of policies, programs, services and products that affect whether, why, where and how people travel. TDM programs and strategies are meant to encourage greater use of sustainable modes of transportation and trip decision making that reduces, combines or shortens vehicle trips. Developers, property owners, employers, government agencies and non-profits can implement TDM programs. Non-profit TDM implementers are often referred to as transportation management associations (TMAs)

Downtown conditions at the time of the study (from report):

- 7.6 million square feet of building area, 71 percent of which was occupied when the study was completed.
- 60 percent of downtown land use is commercial.
- Over 90 percent of downtown workers arrive by car, mostly as single occupants but with some carpooling.
- Motorists choose their parking location based on price and proximity to destination, with 60 percent of workers parking within a 5-minute walk of work.
- 50 percent of downtown workers park in a garage, 40 percent in surface lots, and 4 percent on the street.

Employee survey results (1,300 surveyed)

- 80 percent drive alone to work; 10 percent carpool. (This is consistent with U.S. Census findings, but higher than national rate.)
- Of those who drive alone to work, 60 percent said they never need vehicle during the day, and only 9 percent reported needing a personal vehicle either once or multiple times a day
- 20 percent would like to receive information about carpooling, walking, biking and riding the bus.
- 31 percent of respondents would like to use those travel modes more often than they do.
- Almost 50 percent of employees feel there is not enough parking downtown Syracuse.
- 53 percent of employees said they are aware of all the parking options available to them.
- Almost 40 percent feel there is not enough parking near their workplace.
- 25 percent reported that their employer pays for their parking; 30 percent reported that their employers help cover transit costs.
- When employees who receive free parking were asked how they would generally travel to work if given \$70 a month instead of free parking, 16 percent said they would ride the bus, walk, bike or carpool instead of drive.
- 22 percent of respondents said they would use transit four or more times per week if given a free transit pass.
- 9 percent said they always feel safe when walking alone in downtown; 6 percent say they feel safe when walking with another person.
- Asked what they would do with \$80 a month for transportation, 80 percent would take payout.

Desired TDM programs: free car during the day, guaranteed ride home, information tailored to self

Employer survey results (30 surveyed)

- Key concerns: availability of sidewalks; timeliness of deliveries; condition of roadways; bike-pedestrian safety; availability of bike routes.
- From report: “Plurality of employers believe that employee recruitment negatively impacted by the downtown transportation system. Employers also expressed concern with the downtown transportation system’s impact on transportation costs and employee productivity. Large number of employers do not feel that parking availability is adequate for visitors and customers, and only 41 percent of employers say that parking availability is adequate for employees.
- Transportation impacts: employee recruitment, transportation costs, employee productivity
- Existing services: 30 percent offer flexible hours; some offer telecommuting
- Desired TDM services: 42 percent want more transportation planning for future growth.

- “It’s up to employers to take that next step. ... The grassroots, civic involvement is great. We need a champion. That’s something we don’t see a lot. ”
- 31 percent want TDM participation (clearinghouse represented by employers and government agencies) would require legislature to pass.
- It would: advocate or develop carpool matching, online clearinghouse for transit information, system improvements, bike parking system.

## **II. Tom Pelis, Facilities and Planning, Upstate**

- Upstate Medical University is a small city: 9,500 employees, 1,500 students, 500,000 visitors a year, operates 24/7
- Almost all staff unionized: “It requires negotiation with unions to change anything.”
- All employees pay for parking. It’s mandated by the state. “If we want money to improve resources, we have to show income.” (State funding on the decline.)
- It’s unclear how parking/transportation concerns affect recruitment and retention. Nurses will pay for parking at other hospitals, but it’s free at clinics.
- A third of food service/cleaning staff use public transportation.
- “We don’t find this (parking/transit) is a stated reason barrier to retention.”
- Plans underway to relocate about 400 employees to Galleries of Syracuse downtown.
- Hospital owns four garages and dozens of service lots and leased lots on Genesee and Fayette streets. (8,000 registered parkers.)
- If hospital provided free parking, it would lose \$7.5 million a year.
- Parking costs \$25-35/month for night shift up to \$90/month, based on union contract.
- Two zipcars for students.
- Investigating zipcars for employees. (Requires union negotiation: “Something that seems simple, in our organization can take years.”)
- “You’d be surprised ... people will lie, cheat and steal when it comes to parking”
- “We’re really worried about anything that’s done to I-81.” Advocating for a robust transit system to the suburbs integrated into I-81 project and in place before construction. ... I81 project is a catalyst to do something good.”
- I-81 project will force people to use mass transit.
- During hospital construction, employees given free parking and shuttles to work. They liked it.
- Hospital has major facilities on both sides of 81. Four recent vehicle accidents crossing Almond Street.

## **III. Scot Vanderpool and Melissa Cadwell, Syracuse University**

- SU continues to grow and build every year and loses parking spaces. “We’re almost forced to take a look at alternative transportation options,” Vanderpool said.
- SU’s transit system carries more than 6,700 people a day.
- Cast loss of parking as improvements to SU campus and image.

- Zipcars at SU: 16 cars; \$15 signup fee; \$7.50/hour or \$64 a day; no administrative work or cost to SU
- Promote one-seat rides: Centro bus routes from suburbs to SU w/o requiring transferring
- Zimride: private rideshare program in second year at SU. Allows syr.edu holders to find rides or offer seats to other university community members. Free to use. Drivers and riders negotiate price. No cash transactions; uses Paypal. Challenge is getting people with vehicles willing to participate. 50 users; 89 active commutes
- (First-year students who live on campus cannot have cars.)
- Centro Guaranteed Ride Home: part of fare deal program. If stranded or working late, Centro will send ride. Few people using.
- Connective Corridor buses are free for all – not just students. “It’s a nice little connection between campus and downtown,” Vanderpool said. (Eliminated Everson loop at students’ request.)
- Bike share: Started in February 2015. Uses 25 unclaimed student bikes from fall 2014. Free to students. Operated out of Archbold Gym. Need SUID and must sign waiver. 24-hour rental or all weekend. Tried something more complicated, but did not get funding. Most usage is on weekends. Students supply helmets. Student association paus for labor.
- Cadwell: “The more students from both campuses (SU and ESF) who get involved, the more who can get around.”
- Twitter updates show bus delays and detours.

### Questions/discussion

Little coordination between SU and hospital, although Upstate provides some parking spaces to Crouse.

University Hospital shuttle will serve staff working at Galleries.

**Peter Sarver:** What efforts are underway to change behavior around using cars as a way to improve public health? **Pelis:** Upstate, Crouse, ESF and SU tried to encourage that via a consortium. “That’s social demand, but who is going to pay for it?”

**Mel Menon:** “People don’t want to give up their vehicles. It’s a lifeline. They’ll pay whatever they have to know their car is available.

When SU managers approached about moving employee’s shift time slightly to accommodate bus schedule, most agree to do so.

All SU buses are wheelchair accessible; parking is at or above ADA requirements.

SU free fare zone: two bus routes (Westcott/Euclid and Drumlins) operate through campus. Faculty, staff and students can ride free within free zone. A lot of people who live in Meadowbrook and Westcott area use it.

100 percent mortgage program encourages SU staff and faculty to live near campus.

Can elements of SU/UHill be replicated? TDM could advocate.

How big must city be/what is the trigger point for a community to push for change? **Colone:** See SMTC study. Trigger point generally a significant change to ecosystem or transit system – like I-81 project.

**Heidi Holtz:** Does community know the Connective Corridor bus connects Armory Square to Syracuse Stage? It's a smart marketing idea. Answer: It's become more about getting students downtown than civic engagement. Now that funding has run out and SU is funding it, will watch to see what happens.

**Next Study Session: Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 4:30 – 6 p.m. Location: TBD**

**How CNY Moves in New Ways: Carshare, RideShare, Van Share, Taxi Apps, Shuttles, and more.**

Upcoming October meeting opportunities and topics include two Thursday morning sessions are as follows:

**Tuesday, October 6, 4:30 – 6 p.m.** – How CNY Moves in New Ways – car share, rideshare, vanship, taxi apps, shuttles and more.

**Thursday, October 8, 8:15 – 9:15 a.m. @ Drumlins** – NYSDOT Commissioner Matt Driscoll – Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation System for NYS

**Wednesday, October 21, 12 – 2 p.m.** SUNY Oswego Metro Center – How CNY Moves with Smart Growth and Complete Streets

**Thursday, October 29, 8:15 – 10:30 a.m. @ Drumlins\*** – Syracuse's SMART 1 study and Albany CDTA's [BusPlus](#)

\*8:15 – 9:15 a.m. large group session in Nottingham Room; 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. follow-up Study Committee session

--Submitted by Renée K. Gadoua, study writer