



# Parking and Transportation Assessment

**Campus Outreach Summary**  
May 18, 2023



# Campus Engagement

## Purpose

- To build upon existing university-led outreach to engage with Lehigh University students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders.
- To obtain meaningful feedback on potential parking and transportation solutions/recommendations prior to implementation.

## Campus Engagement Highlights

- Virtual (video conference) stakeholder meetings with Lehigh University senior leadership, planning, and operations staff (March-May 2023)
- In-person pop-up tabling outreach events, primarily with students (April 2023)
- Virtual focus group meetings with faculty and staff (April 2023) and students (May 2023)

# On-Campus Outreach



# Pop-up Tabling Events

## Pop-Up Outreach Events

As part of broader campus-wide outreach, four (4) pop-up outreach events were conducted in April to ask students (undergraduate and graduate) and faculty and staff members “what is most important” when considering their campus bus trip and parking.

After completing the activity, participants could scan a QR code to enter a drawing for a chance to win 1 of 4 \$25 Mastercard gift cards; winners were selected at random and were notified via email on April 19, 2023.

## Pop-Up Outreach Highlights

- Monday, April 17, 2023
  - Iacocca Hall bus stop 10:30-12:30 (17 participants)
  - Farrington Mail Center 1:30-3:30 (73 participants)
- Tuesday, April 18, 2023
  - Rathbone Dining Hall 10:30-12:30 (43 participants)
  - Whitaker Lab bus stop (43 participants)

E-blasts from Lehigh University were distributed campus-wide to promote the events on April 13 and 17.

# Pop-up Tabling Events

## Tabletop Activity - "What is most important you...."

This tabletop activity was conducted at all four (4) pop-up locations. Participants were given six (6) colored dots that could be placed on multiple categories or, if desired, all on a single category.

To better understand who was participating in the activity, dots were distributed in the following manner:

- Yellow - undergraduate students
- Red - graduate students
- Blue - faculty and staff

The project team engaged with **176 students, faculty and staff** over the course of the two days.



# Pop-up Tabling Events

What is **most** important to you for your campus **bus ride**?

What is **most** important to you for your campus **parking**?



More Frequent Service	More Direct Service	Safer Stops	More Accessible Stops	Signage Information	Mobile Information

Availability	Convenience	Cost	Safety	Connections (walk, bus)	Enforcement

Comments

# Pop-up Tabling Events

## Tabletop Activity Summary

Based on the results of the tabletop/dot activity, the “most important” aspects of campus busing and campus parking to participants were:

### Campus Transit Dots

- |                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. More frequent service | 200 |
| 2. More accessible stops | 103 |
| 3. Mobile information    | 100 |
| 4. More direct service   | 76  |
| 5. Signage information   | 12  |
| 6. Safer Stops           | 9   |

### Campus Parking Dots

- |                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| 1. Availability | 184 |
| 2. Cost         | 162 |
| 3. Convenience  | 96  |
| 4. Enforcement  | 24  |
| 5. Connections  | 16  |
| 6. Safety       | 12  |



# Pop-up Tabling Events

## Other Comments/Feedback Collected

In addition to the feedback received via the tabletop activity, project team members also engaged in discussions with participants. The following are additional comments/feedback received:

### Campus Transit

- More service is needed around sporting events/campus event times. Only one Campus Connector van runs on the weekend and it gets very crowded. Students are missing events or having to call Ubers.
- Students must rely on older students for car rides to sports practices because campus buses do not offer times to get to and from practices; one student requested an “athletes only” bus to take student athletes from Main Campus to practice facilities from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. or 7 p.m.
- The Mountaintop Express needs to actually be “express.” Too many students take this bus to travel around Main Campus, which leads to overcrowding. There are too many stops on this route and it takes too long to get up the mountain.
- More buses running on a more frequent schedule. Sometimes Asa Packer buses come two at a time then nothing comes for a long time. We have to “hope” that another bus will come in time for us to get to class.
- In general, there should be more transit and less parking.
- Please add a bus stop at the quad. There are a lot of people living in the area.

# Pop-up Tabling Events

## Campus Parking

- Why is the Lehigh University parking enforcement fine \$50 when the City of Bethlehem parking enforcement fine is \$15?
- Overall, the price of student parking passes is too high (\$500).
- Staff should be able to park where they work. Several staff from dining services have handicapped placards on their vehicles and are not allowed to park in front of/close to Rathbone. Instead, they must park in the lot behind Emery and Leavitt; there are too many stairs and not enough lighting which presents safety issues.
- There are not many parking options for commuter students, only Goodman or Zoellner for the first year. Students are put on a waiting list for other lots after that, only to end up back in Goodman.
- Commuter students need more parking options on Main Campus. Why do students who live on Main Campus who don't necessarily need parking, have better options than commuter students?
- Many commuter students are buying passes in the New Street garage to have a guaranteed spot and to bypass having to work with the university. Commuter students are "neglected" by the university and need better parking options.
- There is too much enforcement. Even if you are 30 seconds or one minute over, you get a ticket.

# Focus Group Meetings



# Campus Outreach: Focus Groups

## Focus Group Meetings

FHI Studio hosted seven (7) virtual focus group meetings with students, faculty and staff, and business partners to discuss draft strategies for improving parking and transit at the university. The focus groups captured a variety of different users of the parking system, including people with Zoellner, Alumni, Farrington, Mountaintop, Sayre commuter, and Goodman commuter permits.

Lehigh University recruited and invited all participants. FHI Studio prepared discussion guides and facilitated the meetings.

The following summarizes the key themes from the focus groups.

## Focus Group Highlights

- Tuesday, April 25
  - Faculty and Staff (8 attendees)
  - Students (1 attendee)
- Wednesday, April 26
  - Faculty and Staff (7 attendees)
  - Students (1 attendee)
- Thursday, April 27
  - Faculty and Staff (6 attendees)
- Tuesday, May 9
  - Business Partners (6 attendees)
- Thursday, May 11
  - Commuter Students (3 attendees)

# Focus Group Summary

## Campus Parking

- Participants viewed parking as too expensive. Faculty and staff (F/S) are uncertain what their fees are used for, and the fines are too high. Some expressed support for free or reduced parking rates on Goodman and Sayre campuses. Others noted that the fines are too high and should match the City of Bethlehem's.
- F/S would prefer a salary-based model. F/S noted the disproportionate financial burden that is placed on colleagues with lower salaries.
- The risk of not finding a space would be more frustrating than the lack of flexibility. Although the desire for flexibility was a consistent theme, predictability is key. F/S and student participants want to have a space available, even if this means they do not get assigned their preferred zone.
- A 3-day hybrid pass is not seen as desirable by most participants. F/S need the flexibility to come in more than three days, and they frequently come in on different days. Some F/S noted that there are equity considerations. Providing a hybrid pass was seen as unfair by those who are required to come in every day, especially if they are lower paid than F/S who have more flexibility. Some expressed concern that a hybrid pass would incentivize F/S to be on campus less.
- Mountaintop faculty expressed a need for more short-term F/S parking on Asa Packer campus. They felt they should not have to pay extra for a dual pass to teach courses on main campus. Faculty members find short-term F/S parking limited and often pay to park at on-street meters.
- F/S requested improved communication when garages or lots are closed for special events. Admissions events when Alumni Garage was closed was noted as a frustration for multiple participants.

# Focus Group Summary

## Campus Parking

- F/S have requested more active loading zones adjacent to buildings. A 30-minute loading period would be sufficient.
- Parking reserved for people with disabilities is needed at every building. Some F/S noted that disabled parking was not always in areas that made sense, such as the spaces adjacent to the staircases at Iacocca.
- The parking system is difficult to understand. Participants were confused by the zones; one participant said she parked off campus and walked farther because the zones did not make sense. Several participants expressed frustration with over-ticketing and felt they were being punished by their employer for doing essential functions.

## Campus Transit

- The hours of operation of transit service is a challenge for students. Students need to be able to get to Mountaintop as early as 5 a.m. for certain data collection classes, and some students need to access arts studios late.
- Improved frequency was a frequent request. Among both existing riders and interested riders, frequency was mentioned as a top priority.
- F/S said the lack of seating on the bus was a barrier to riding. Crowding, know-how, unreliability, and long waits were also raised as barriers.
- Using the goLehigh Transit service requires homework. Many participants felt the system was not easy to understand initially. The bus tracker does not always work.

# Focus Group Summary

## Campus Transit

- Buses shutting down due to inclement weather is a concern. There have been cases where the bus system shut down but classes were on-going so people felt stranded.
- Participants suggested the buses are stopping too many times. This adds to the perceptions that the service is slow and discourages people from riding.
- Bus stops need more information about the system. More shelters and improved sidewalks were requested.