

# 'WHEE' WANT TO KNOW

## WCU Parking Issues, Can we expect a change?



Tom Johnson, Director of WCU Police and Traffic Services..

### New Parking Pattern Frustrates WCU Student Commuters

On most days, not a moment goes by when the WCU Police Station does not hear a complaint about commuter parking.

Student commuters complain about not being able to find a spot making them late to class, arguing with the front desk about why they got a ticket...even though there was a sign posted shying commuters away from that particular lot and the demanding reasoning behind the increase of payment when receiving a parking citation.

Director of WCU Police and Traffic Services, Tom Johnson has been bombarded with work regarding Commuter Parking. "Students expect to be able to park really close to classes, but with all the construction going on most of the interior of campus parking lots are closed to commuters."

This year WCU campus is getting a face lift including, a new gymnasium as well as the beginnings of several new dormitories which takes a number of faculty and resident parking. With that being said, faculty and residents of dorm have access to most campus interior lots.

Michelle Steadman, a commuter student here at WCU says, "I have to leave for class over 45 minutes early in order to find a parking space. It's ridiculous. I fell sorry for those students who have 8am classes!"

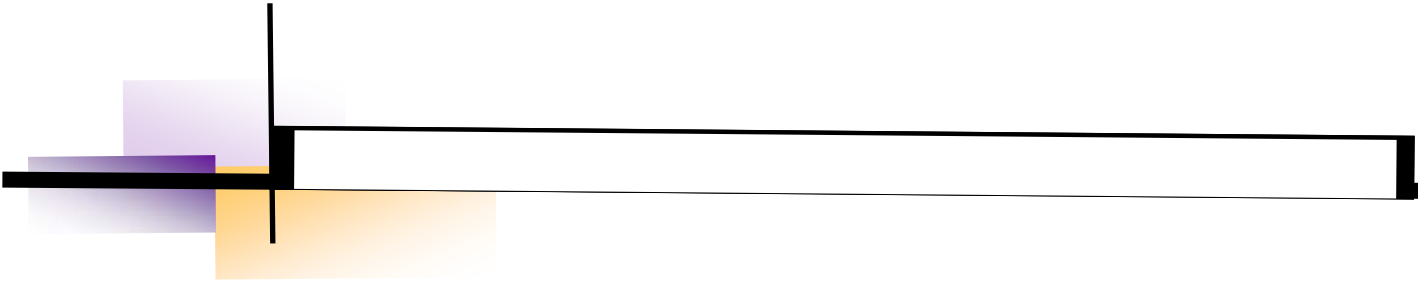
Many alternatives have come up in order to satisfy the University as well as it's commuter students. Tom Johnson has had numerous meetings about how a change can be implemented.

Some alternatives include, riding the Cat Tran provided by the university or using the new Jackson County Transit bus that goes to designated apartment complexes to pick up students.

Also, WCU student government is coming up with a campus-wide program to encourage students to use bikes instead of automobiles as part as a "Green" effort to cut back on the number of vehicles driven to better our Earth. This program will include bike racks being installed on Cat Trans for those students who do not wish to travel up hills.

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The building of parking garages has been brought up in the past, but in reality, they're just way too expensive for this university at this time. Johnson states, "Parking Decks can cost thousands pricing to \$1500 per space and \$26,000 per garage."

The deletion of freshman having the right to park on campus has also brought up, but again, just will not work. "City schools such as UNCC, NC State, UNC-Chapel Hill can afford to have no freshman parking because of the abundance of public transportation. Cullowhee is too rural and would leave many freshman students stuck."

Believe it or not, WCU commuters just don't understand how good they've got it. At this university Parking Permits go for about \$60.00 whereas at other institutions they can go for hundreds of dollars. Appalachian State University parking costs up to \$210.00 per year, while Duke University asks up to \$726.00 annually for their parking privileges.



## Tips on How to Receive and Maintain Commuter Parking Spots:

- \*Leave your home in a timely manner which will allow enough time to find a space.
  - \*Use the Cat Tran or Jackson County Transit.
- \*Once you have found a parking spot, do not try to drive to your next class building, stay in one spot. Chances of finding another on time are not likely.
  - \* Visit [www.police.wcu.edu/V.htm](http://www.police.wcu.edu/V.htm) for any other information regarding WCU Parking.



Image of University Cat Trans.