PARKING FAQs

Why would Ohio State consider leasing the management of its parking operations?
Tough economic times mean we need to find new ways to pay for critical academic needs, including more tenured faculty and student scholarships. So we must be innovative and willing to rethink the status quo.

How would you spend the money?
We would invest in a long-term pool. If the lease agreement brings in $400 million, for example, we could invest:

- $200 million on key academic programs—and hiring and supporting new faculty
- $75 million on student scholarships
- $50 million on key areas such the planned arts corridor
- $75 million to improve transportation and make campus easier to navigate

How did you come up with the $400 million figure as an example? Why are companies willing to invest that kind of money in parking?
To arrive at the $400 million estimate, we worked with Morgan Stanley, Jones Day and Desman Associates, who considered various scenarios. Investors are seeking opportunities with stable returns and low levels of uncertainty—like a parking investment at Ohio State.

What’s happening with this now?
We have issued a Request for Qualifications for parking vendors to find out who is interested in bidding. We will not choose a company based on money alone, however. We are also looking for a firm that will maintain or even improve current parking services. If we do decide to go forward with the lease, Ohio State will still own its parking garages and lots.

In addition, we've put together a Parking Advisory Group to help guide us. The group has set up town hall meetings and other discussion sessions with faculty, students, and staff. Plus, they are reviewing operating standards and a “concession” agreement—which would govern how the lease works. Group members are:

- Larry Anstine, CEO, University Hospital
- Geoff Chatas, Senior Vice President, Business and Finance (co-chair)
- Chris Culley, Senior Vice President and General Counsel (co-chair)
- Vijay Gadepally, President, Council of Graduate Students
- Javaune Adams-Gaston, Vice President, Student Life
- Brad Harris, Chief Administrative Officer, Arts and Sciences
- Jay Kasey, Senior Vice President, Administration and Planning
- Heather Link, Chair, University Staff Advisory Committee
- Kathleen McCutcheon, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer
- Nick Messenger, President, Undergraduate Student Government
- Jim Rathman, Chair, Faculty Council
- Robert Schottenstein, Member, Board of Trustees
- Bruce Weide, Professor, Senate Fiscal Representative

How will you share the Parking Advisory Group’s findings?
We will publish information from the group to faculty, staff, and students in OSU Today, and on a website (http://www.busfin.ohio-state.edu/parkinginfo.aspx). We will also send emails with key information to faculty, staff and students. We are committed to making this a transparent process. If you need more information or have questions, please let us know.
How long would a parking agreement last?
Long-term leases raise more money, so any lease agreement would likely be between 30 to 50 years (with 50 years being the longest).

Will my parking rates go up?
The company cannot raise rates more than 7.5 percent annually for the first 10 years, which is the average amount that rates have gone up for the last 12 years. That cap is built into the resolution authorizing the lease. Rates have gone up an average of 5.6 percent in the last 10 years and 4.5 percent in the last five. Companies interested in the lease have all of these numbers and we expect them to propose rate increases lower than 7.5 percent. To be sure, keeping rates as low as possible is a big priority.

Under the parking agreement, will parking for free events such as move-in remain free? Will regional campus faculty continue to be able to purchase permits at less than Columbus rates? Will emeritus faculty still have free parking? Will the university have to pay the vendor for use of parking spaces now reserved for university vehicles or departments?
Specific details will need to be negotiated, but our goal is to ensure that services provided today will stay the same. This means, for example, that parking arrangements for major university events such as move-in, Commencement, and football games would not change.

Will you be able to limit parking rate increases for graduate associates?
We’re currently discussing this question and are working on a solution.

Can you assure faculty, staff, and students that services will remain the same or get better?
Any firm chosen will have to follow current operating standards—which have been crafted by Transportation and Parking employees. An operator would face penalties for failing to meet standards and would have to go through remediation. Any serious violations could mean the agreement would be terminated and the university would take back over operations.

Who will provide security for parking lots and garages?
Security will continue to be handled by the university’s Department of Public Safety.

How will CABS be funded going forward?
The university is dedicated to continuing to fund CABS at current service levels as well as improving services as needed.

Will the university have the ability to continue existing Framework and sustainability plans?
Yes. Those plans have been shared with all bidders who have been informed that the university will continue to move forward on those initiatives.

What will happen to the Transportation and Parking staff?
Any staff members affected by the parking changes will be able to interview with the new firm. If the firm doesn’t offer them a job, or they choose not to accept one, the university will offer them a position. We will honor Civil Service rules for classified staff and those covered by the CWA union contract.

Will OSU have enough flexibility to remove parking garages or build new ones? What happens if OSU wants to build a new parking garage or lot?
The agreement spells out three options: (1) The operator can build and operate the facility. (2) We can require the operator to build it. (3) We can build it and operate it outside of any formal agreement. Also, we can eliminate a certain number of spaces without penalty.
What is the timeline for a decision?
Final proposals will be due later this Spring/Summer. A decision is expected no later than fall 2012.

Besides parking, what else is the university considering leasing or selling?
We are evaluating other options that might help us raise funds for our core academic mission, including leasing or selling the airport and golf courses.

Does the state constitution allow you to lease state resources? Yes. The Ohio Revised Code says the university may lease facilities such as parking lots to private parties.

Are you considering all of the potential changes in technology, fuel and driving patterns that could occur during such a long time frame?
Yes, any operating agreement will expect the parking vendor to study data, implement new parking solutions, and continually review existing practices. Specifically, the parking vendor will be expected to continue or expand upon existing sustainability efforts, including
- Limelight™ - a wireless lighting control system
- solar power for metering devices, the Hertz car sharing program
- bicycle air pumps
- parking spaces for low emission
- fuel efficient vehicles, vanpool benefits
- a carpool program

The University’s pilot a program for electric car recharging stations is also considered in the agreement. To help, the University will partner with the vendor and conduct experiments in technology, allow data collection and provide a real-life campus laboratory.

Will there be an opportunity for the university to decrease parking locations if more public transit options become available? Is the university considering more park-and-ride options for remote parking?
Regardless of who manages the parking garages and lots, the University will always be able to adjust to meet a changing environment. Remote parking and public transit already are ideas for a more pedestrian-friendly campus, and these certainly will be studied. And, any decisions regarding Park and Ride options, and bus transportation (CABS) from remote lots and other locations on camp will be made by the University.

Will a parking vendor be required to maintain security in the garages and after-hours in the surface lots?
Safety and security are the University's highest priorities. The parking vendor will be required to develop and document policies and procedures to guarantee the public's security and safety. Also, the parking vendor must abide by all rules of Ohio State Public Safety, which will continue to hold authority over the garages and lots.