

P&T Spring 2025 Forum Questions & Answers

1. License Plate Recognition (LPR) Issues

- When will the LPR system be reliable/stable? I note that, besides myself, there are still several others, each shift change, that cannot access or egress a parking facility that is LPR enabled.

During the month of March, our vendor upgraded all 72 lanes of LPR equipment, putting in a firmware update that fixed the “bug” that has been in the system for several months. This fix has greatly increased the success rate of the LPR system. Our goal is to get the entry lanes to between 85% - 90% LPR and the exit lanes to between 90% - 95% LPR. We’ve mainly reached this goal in the last week, however there are still a few outliers. Our embedded tech reviews the data each morning and goes and adjusts cameras that don’t meet the above standard. The most important things a parking subscriber can do is: ensure their license plates are clean and the reflective coating hasn’t worn off, ensure the vehicle is listed on their parking account AND linked to their virtual permit on their parking account.

- Why does the exit onto Duval from the 8th Street Parking Deck NEVER work using the license plate system?

This is a lane we are still working on, it is reading at around 80% right now and our tech has been working to improve its capability over the past few days.

- The reliability of the LPRs still seems poor, particularly in D Deck on MCV campus. At least once a week I have to use my VCU ID to get into or out of the deck, despite having nothing that blocks either the front or back plate. Really annoying.

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- Alternate entry window decal?

That won't work with LPR. It has to be a license plate and has to be in the same general area as a license plate would be based on how the cameras are aimed. The alternate ID to use is your VCUID to scan at the access column at the entry to the deck.

- What is the status of the suggested signage or bumper on the parking garage exits so people know where to pull up and stop so that the license plate readers can actually read the license plates (which don't work because I have to use my ID badge every day to sign in and out).

We continue to work on this. The LPR cameras should all be working significantly better now that the firmware update has been installed making this less of a need, but we continue to look at options for this.

2. Parking Deck/ Lot Operations

- Why isn't there a shuttle for N deck/When Will there be a shuttle from N deck?

A shuttle dedicated to the N Deck has not been provided for many years. However, N Deck subscribers can jump on the O lot or A lot shuttles which both stop at the corner of Turpin & 10th near the Larrick Center directly to the west of the N Deck.

- I was wondering if you could possibly give some insight into A Lot Main street station. I've noticed multiple times where cars have parked over the lines into the spaces to the left and right of them. Are there rules regarding this?

A Lot Main St. Station is leased by VCU from the City of Richmond. We do not have any operational authority within that lot. It is all controlled by the city. We can and will mention this to them to see if they want to enforce it better.

- Plan for the closure of D deck and downstream impacts.

There is no information on this at this time.

- This question is in regards to N Deck. I have noticed that with weather sometimes the LPR does not work. Especially when it's cloudy or very rainy. There is not a cover at the N Deck scan box so that if we have to scan our badge we are getting wet from the rain. Is there a way that LPR could be fixed so that if the weather is bad that there is a way to get in or out of the deck without the scan?

We have not heard of this before but will follow up with our vendor, weather shouldn't cause too much of an impact to the system. In the future we may put a canopy over this area.

- Thank you for having me. I wanted to know more about the waitlist for D-deck. Is it being managed? I am being told even physicians are being put in remote lots. Is there a precedent for on call workers being able to park in closer lots after hours.

There is no waitlist for the D Deck. There is a criteria for being on the deck which in simple terms means you must provide direct patient care on an in-patient unit. However the deck is at capacity at the moment so even most physicians are being placed in other locations at the moment.

3. Parking Permits and Policies

- Can you pay extra to park everywhere (in case of unforeseen situations ex. Running late, weather).

At this time this is not an option.

- I would like to switch my D deck pass from night shift to day shift.

Please contact parking@vcu.edu to explore options.

- I have new Plates on my car how can i get them registered so i wont get more tickets

You need to add the vehicle to your parking account and then add it to your virtual permit. More information on how to do that can be found [here](#). Please scroll down and view the video titled "How to manage vehicles on your virtual permit."

- Date for inscription to the fall semester 2025

Permits for fall 2025 sales will take place in July, please watch your email.

4. Parking Fees

- I am an hourly, non-benefited part time employee, limited to 29 hours or less, but I don't qualify for the \$45 per month parking rate because I earn over \$19/hr. Can you tell me how you set the hourly rate?

The rate is set at \$19.57 per hour right now and assuming the 3% raise from the state goes through on 7/1, it would rise to \$20.16 per hour. This rate is based on the lowest paid full-time staff members at VCU. If a part-time worker at 29 hours per week could earn more than someone working a full 40 hour per week job, they should not be paying the part-time rate.

- Payroll, interested in rate increase info for July to prepare for Banner table updates. Thanks.

We have requested a 3% parking increase that will go in front of the board in May, if approved, it'll take effect July 1.

5. Safety and Security

- Is Parking & Transportation the correct department to generally address bad driving habits of bicyclists on campus? If not, can you advise the appropriate department to reach out to?

You can certainly inform us but VCU Police would likely be the better place to report these types of issues.

- A friendly reminder to watch your speed as cars are driving way too fast and people are walking to exit the deck.

The speed limit within parking garages and lots is 5 mph as posted. Please be careful coming around corners and watching for pedestrians.

- I do not know if the drivers have a forum where they are permitted to give feedback, but I know that one of the buses has had a broken seat belt that drivers have reported. Unless something has happened recently, it still has not been fixed. One of the buses has a door that must be pushed on with a broom stick before it will open.

We will follow up with our vendor on these issues.

6. Event Parking and RamRide

- As someone with an invisible illness that periodically affects my mobility, I hope VCU will continue to supply parking subscribers with ADA compliant shuttle buses. The one step up onto the bus is especially helpful for anyone with a mobility challenge. It is a relief when the hydraulics lower to make that step shorter. Anyone with back, hip, knee or ankle pain can attest to the shorter drop in height when boarding and disembarking results in less pain. Will we get more of these ADA compliant buses? If not, why is VCU willing to disregard physically challenged subscribers? Please keep in mind that suggesting we wait for another bus if the one we see first is not accessible. Making people with disabilities wait longer for a bus that is ADA compliant is not operating in an ADA compliant manner. It is an insult to the disabled, letting us know we are not seen or valued. ADA compliant buses should be the only type VCU uses.

We currently have 12 low-floor buses and our vendor supplements with other buses when we need more. We are in the process of procuring 4 more low-floor buses as well which we expect to be delivered within a year. We certainly want to give everyone options. There is a balancing act between price and need. VCU pays for these buses within our contract, if we asked for say 20 of them, our prices would rise which would mean we'd have to raise parking prices to cover it. We try to balance all of that out.

- Some of the other buses are very difficult or even impossible to board and disembark from when using canes or other mobility aids. I am referring especially to the white buses

that riders refer to as 'the milk trucks' or 'inmate transport' because they are the barest bones of a vehicle. They seem to lack shocks of any kind, and the stairs are extremely steep and narrow, and slippery in wet weather. They are poor choices for transportation for anyone carrying packages, commuting while pregnant or for any day that is not dry and sunny. They are an injury waiting to happen. I have taken a pass on boarding them when I think the risk is greater than I can handle that day.

We have 12 of the low-floor buses and have submitted an order for 4 more, which we hope will arrive within the next year. Our vendor supplements service with other buses to meet our needs. Once we receive the 4 new ones, this should greatly reduce the number of supplemental buses needed and get those white buses out of service.

- The black buses are similar in regards to the stairs, but have an additional issue with that extra step on the bottom that is really flimsy. The clear acrylic handles have come undone, making it necessary to either forgo boarding or grip the railing that is NOT meant for that purpose. They are also extremely difficult to maneuver into seats when the aisles are narrow, the seat backs are angled backwards. The black buses have a seat back design feature making them only usable for yogis and people who do not have claustrophobia.

We are working to add additional buses to the fleet which would make it so the black buses can be used less.

- I am actually wondering if campus partners can be notified of any major events that may impact access and parking at the parking decks? Many offices on campus, including my own, validate parking for their visitors and are often caught off guard when visitors are required to pay. With previous inquiries to VCU Parking & Transportation, I've been directed to just check to parking.vcu.edu < Special Events < Calendar; the issue is that 1) It is not updated and 2) Not something I would refer to on a regular basis. I've often had to go to the Siegel Center webpage or other resources to see what events are taking place, but I do feel that a regular update from Parking & Transportation would be helpful and greatly appreciated across campus partners.

We do our best but sometimes get caught off-guard when events pop up. Typically you can always count on if a men's basketball game is taking place, West Broad St. Deck will have limited visitor availability and if Altria is hosting an event, West Main St. Deck will have limited availability.

- Why are the shuttles so inconsistent? In the morning there are usually very frequent, but, in the afternoon when everyone wants to get home, there are not very many and the wait is long.

Bus timetables fluctuate but the number of buses running increases from 2 per hour at 3pm, to as many as 6 on some routes during the evening rush. The challenge we have is that everyone

in downtown Richmond is attempting to leave in that 4pm - 6pm timeframe so the buses take a lot longer to move throughout the city. Adding more buses won't necessarily help as they may end up getting caught in traffic, caught by traffic lights, etc.

- The bus tracking app is more frustrating than it is helpful. Can you all please develop a bus schedule similar to what GRTC uses?

Unfortunately, not all of our bus stops are in areas where we could hold in order to create bus timetables. It is something on our radar we would like to improve upon in the future.

- If GRTC goes back to charging a fare for riding the bus, will it still be fare-free for VCU Employees and Students as it was previously when a fare was charged (pre-pandemic)?

Should GRTC ever put fares back in place, that is something the university will consider at that time.

- My concern is regarding A Lot shuttle. The last shuttle for this lot is 1950, which puts a strain on inpatient employees that work 12-hour shifts. On most days it is impossible to make it out by this time. The alternative is to either walk down the hill (which can be unsafe, and the weather could be bad) or catch the O lot Bus. Catching the O lot bus takes you about 30 minutes out of the way, just to make it to your vehicle.

We are working with our transportation partner to clarify that the last A Lot shuttle should depart from Sanger Hall at 8pm to ensure folks can make it to the A Lot at night. A second option other than the O Lot shuttle is to utilize the RamSafe service through the RidePingo App or call **(804) 828-SAFE (7233)** to book a RamSafe ride.

7. Cleanliness and Maintenance

- What is the status of the repairs in 8th Street when there was a fire?

We are currently awaiting a report from the engineers to determine the extent of any repairs needed.

- As we approach summer-was the suggestion of checking the air conditioning in the elevators in the 8th street deck been evaluated? Someone could actually die of heat stroke in those elevators if they were ever to get stuck.

Yes, this will be done.

- Also, can someone come to clean up on a regular basis (A Lot Main Street)? The broken bottles, bricks, rebar and scrap metal create another safety issue at the stop itself.

We will report this to the City of Richmond.

- How often are these buses given preventative maintenance checks?

Depending on the bus, they are given an intensive preventative maintenance check by a mechanic every 500 miles or 30 days. Drivers conduct a once over of the vehicle before and after they operate a bus.

8. Employee-Specific Parking Concerns

- Why doesn't the University provide a subsidy for VCU Parking employees? Has it ever been considered? Especially with the cost of living increasing and the possibility of another increase!

At this time the university is not considering this.

- Updated ways to help hybrid workers who need/want a parking pass.

Our value credential system is the way we help out hybrid workers. You can purchase 1, 5, or 10 at once and they are about half the price of a daily visitor pass. If you come to work 5 or less times in a two-week period, value credentials are the cheaper option for you. These are limited though to the following locations: West Broad St. Deck, West Main St. Deck, Jefferson St. Deck, & Henry St. Decks on the MPC campus and only to the I Deck on the MCV campus. More information can be found [here](#).

- Transportation does not go to many buildings that house VCU employees: for example, the Theater Row Building from 8th Street Parking deck.

This is correct, RamRide cannot go everywhere unfortunately and is limited by where it can stop and not impede traffic and budget of course. The nearest stop on the Eighth St. Deck route to Theater Row Building would be the stop at the VCU Health Annex on 11th Street.

- When will the office start enforcing the employee problem in the visitors deck. I have paid for parking in the D Deck for 18 years and they are parking for free. I had family members have to walk for blocks because there were no parking spots.

VCU Parking & Transportation does not own or control the VCU Health Visitor Deck. We have started to partner with them to assist them in enforcing this issue. It is under VCU Health control and we follow their guidance and direction as much as we can while ensuring we maintain our operation.

- Is there any chance that parking privileges will be extended to retired staff (maybe for full-time over 20 years!) as it is extended to faculty emeritus membership? I have worked

full-time at VCU for almost 37 years and would love to be able to attend some things on campus and have parking available. I have also paid for parking for all of those years.

At this time that is not being considered. The retired emeritus faculty permit is paid for by the Office of Faculty Affairs. Something like this would need to happen on the staff side for a free parking permit to exist for them.

9. Traffic Flow and External Access

- University and Health System wide roundabout education (because people are clueless at the 8th street roundabout and don't seem to recognize that those in the roundabout have the right of way). This includes the bus drivers who STOP in the circle to allow multiple cars to enter.

This is a good idea. We will see what we can come up with.

- For A Lot Main Street-can someone post signs where the bus is supposed to stop? Vehicles keep parking there and block the buses from the curb. We have to board in the street sometimes.

We will look into this.

- Can we discuss why the VCU buses transporting students, staff, and faculty in the afternoons during peak departure hours on weekdays take breaks in the A extension lot? There seem to be multiple buses idling there at one time.

We've asked them not to do this. Breaks should be taken outside of peak hours and should really be taken out of sight. Authorized break locations are as follows from RMA: O Lot and A Lot - 18th Street. I Lot - J Sargeant Reynolds.

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