

## Questions from Neighbors' Meeting with the Traffic Engineers

1) Is there really a demand for 631 spaces? What justifies this number of spaces?

Our professional engineers adamantly reinforced the concept that less parking means more congestion. Therefore, the threshold of 631 spaces addresses the parking issue for the HPHS community. Furthermore, it permits us to move forward addressing the congestion issue.

There are 282 spaces allocated for students. Our demand exceeds the availability. Similar to the airlines, we “oversell” parking spaces on the assumption that not every student will drive/park every day. Here is the data for the number of student stickers sold:

- 2008-2009 Senior Stickers Sold #298 (\$250 per sticker)
- 2009-2010 Senior Stickers Sold #288 (\$300 per sticker)
- 2010-2011 Senior Stickers Sold #291 (\$310 per sticker)
- 2011-2012 Senior Stickers Sold #292 in addition to 75 junior applications for a spot (\$320 per sticker)
- 2012-2013 Senior Stickers Sold #272 in addition to 75 junior applications for a spot (\$330 per sticker)
- 2013-2014 senior Stickers Sold #316 in addition to 75 junior applications for a spot (\$340 per sticker)

During the 2014-2015 school year, there were 90 fewer available student spaces.

During the 2014-2015 school year, the District charged \$350 per year for an on-campus sticker and \$250 per year for a remote sticker.

Parking spaces are assigned as follows:

- Student – 282 spaces
- Visitor – 43 spaces
- Staff – 276
- Handicapped – 15
- District Vehicles (including Drivers' Ed, Security) – 10
- Special Request – 5
  
- Total spaces = 631

2) Does less parking mean more traffic?

The results of the traffic counts, the student surveys, and the testimony by community members clearly indicate that private vehicles are the primary travel means to get to and from the Highland Park High School Campus. The pre-construction data showed that 68% of the students arrived by private vehicles (dropped-off or parked) which is higher than the national average of 62%. When less parking was provided for students during the current school year, additional trips on the neighboring streets were created. Students that previously drove to campus and parked are now having a parent drive them resulting in an additional trip. Traffic counts conducted during the current school year with the use of four remote parking locations showed an increase of 9% in drop-off traffic at the school. Please note that the student population decreased 2% during that same time period.

3) Why not use remote spots instead of building more spaces?

During 1<sup>st</sup> semester, 48 remote stickers were sold (out of approximately 90 spaces). The most popular location was the St. Johns/Elm Place lot. During 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, 64 remote stickers were sold. The two most popular locations were the St. Johns/Elm Place lot and the 1<sup>st</sup> Street spaces. During 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, remote stickers were offered to Juniors and six (6) students applied.

Remote spaces, were deemed inconvenient, and as a result, added to the congestion problem as students were dropped off instead. For students with very early or very late extracurricular activities, remote spaces also raised a safety concern.

4) Is study methodology consistent with industry standards and is the sample sufficiently significant to make decisions?

The traffic counts followed the standard industry practice of conducting traffic counts at the school on normal school days. EEA coordinated with District 113 staff to count normal attendance and daily schedule days to avoid holidays, late starts, and other special events. EEA conducted a number of traffic counts and obtained historic data from the City of Highland Park:

Traffic Counts:

- a) The City of Highland Park provided historic traffic counts from their traffic study dated January 13, 2006 with count data from November, 2005. In general, those traffic counts were lower than the 2013 counts.
- b) The City of Highland Park provided traffic counts with the existing traffic signal timings which appear to be conducted the summer of 2011 (exact date not readily available). These summer counts were significantly less than the volumes when school is in session.
- c) Traffic counts were conducted by EEA on August 27 and September 12, 2013 that covering six hours from 7:00 to 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM which are peak school and commuter periods.

- d) Additional counts were conducted the week of September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014 to cover the changes in traffic volumes at the school during construction from 7:00 to 9:00 AM and 2:00 to 4:00 PM.
- e) The traffic survey dates were coordinated with the District staff so they were done on typical days.

Site Visits/Observations:

Mr. Corcoran has made at least 41 visits to the HPHS campus at various times of the day including the peak and non-peak conditions:

- a) Traffic counts at the campus noted above under Item c (7 morning and 7 afternoon observations or 14 visits total).
  - b) Prior to each Traffic Commission, Plan Commission or City Council meeting, Mr. Corcoran visited the school to review roadway conditions, signage, parking, and site usage. (6 visits)
  - c) Oversight Committee Meetings ( 6 visits)
  - d) Focus Group Meetings (3 visits)
  - e) Neighborhood/Community Meetings (3 visits)
  - f) Meetings with City Staff (2 visits)
  - g) Meetings with Police Department (2 visits)
  - h) Meetings with District Staff (5 visits)
- 5) Why not start with the Trip Reduction Plan (TRP) only and assess its impact before building more spaces?

Pursuing this strategy alone as a first line action (without lot expansion and traffic flow changes) would allow unacceptable conditions to persist. The TRP requires long-term behavior modifications of students and staff and could take several school years to take full effect. As noted under the parking demand discussion under Item 1, the parking demand at the campus exceeds the 631 planned spaces. If the TRP is successful in reducing parking demand at the campus, it will reduce the amount of student parking in the adjoining neighborhoods. Also, any decrease in traffic volumes will reduce traffic flows and improve congestion but it will not eliminate the need for the additional parking and an additional student loading area.

- 6) Are you anticipating traffic problems south of Vine on St. Johns?

The traffic south of Vine Avenue on St Johns Avenue should not impact residents south of Vine and the Indian Trails School. The proposed left-turn lane striping for the school would improve existing conditions by separating left-turn and through traffic flows. The traffic reduction task force will be in place to provide input regarding additional signage and enforcement

HPHS will work with the HP Police Department to enforce parking/traffic regulations around the area. Furthermore, the Community Task Force will provide both HPHS and the police department with feedback as to the effectiveness of these strategies.

- 7) Is there a commitment for police enforcement?

As stated in the District's memo of March 30, 2015 to the Plan Commission and the City Council, Chief Shafer is working with the District to assign police coverage at both the morning arrival and afternoon dismissal times. Officers would be assigned to the Vine/St. Johns intersection and the neighboring streets.

- 8) Is the additional drop off area in linear feet without Vine lot expansion sufficient?

The lineal feet of drop-off area would be reduced by approximately 215' if the drop-off area at the proposed Vine lot was eliminated (a loss of 19%). More importantly, it would eliminate a dedicated drop off area for the east bound traffic on Vine, forcing all of that traffic to enter the athletic lot, which is the baseline, and would not improve traffic congestion in that area.

- 9) Are the # of spaces / student population justified?

As stated to the community in March 2013, ***there would be no decrease in parking at either campus***, nor would there be a loss of outdoor athletic space without it being made up elsewhere.

Furthermore, in January 2014, both the District's Referendum Oversight Committee and the Board of Education discussed HPHS parking alternatives. In each scenario, the intent was to retain 631 spaces. Also, Focus Groups conducted during the summer of 2014 confirmed that 631 spaces was the compromise position accepted by all parties.

- 10) Is the proposal to route traffic through the school property (described by neighbor Barry Kahan) a better alternative to manage traffic and drop-off?

See attached analysis.

- 11) Comparative Traffic Volume Analysis

Comparison of Morning Traffic Volumes  
at HPHS Access Points (2005 and 2013)  
(Two-way Volumes at Each Drive)

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2013</u>
North Lot	315	431
Bus Lot	80	122

Athletic Lot	285	418
Vine On-Street Loading	498	246
Visitor Lot	36	117
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Totals	1214	1334
		10%

Please note that drop-off on the south side of Vine was occurring

Enrollment: 2005 – 1906 Students

Enrollment: 2013 – 2053 Students (an increase of 8%)

- 12) I had asked that Dean Sassen review the Lake Forest High School parking policy regarding shared spaces and address how we could incorporate this into the HPHS parking plan.

We reviewed the Lake Forest High School plan students pay \$317 for half a semester, which they share with another student who also pays \$317. Where at HPHS we enforce our current semester parking system by limiting students to on campus/off campus for an entire semester. LFHS runs a week on, week off system. This, from our perspective, is a much more difficult system to monitor and enforce. If space is available a student can purchase a full semester for \$634. Like HPHS, Lake Forest always have more demand than they have spaces, so they hold a lottery each semester. To us, it appears that Lake Forest is attempting to limit parking demand by “pricing students out” of a space. This is something we are philosophically opposed to. We limit parking to seniors, but we work hard to ensure that our costs are such that each senior who would like to drive to school can do so, and that the ability to pay for high parking costs does not impact this decision. In our experience, raising our costs will not reduce our parking demand (many of our students are clearly willing to pay much higher costs), however, it will cause our lower-income students to lose the ability to drive and park on campus.

In summary, after reviewing the LFHS plan, we believe we are already offering a similar, cheaper, and more easily enforceable lottery system that allows all our seniors an opportunity to drive and park at school.