



The University of Maryland Plan to Temporarily Restrict Access to Campus Drive

Why Restrict Access to Campus Drive and Why Now?

The current 2001-2020 Facilities Master Plan must be updated and presented to the University System of Maryland Board of Regents in September 2011 (to become the FMP for 2011-2030). Since 1991, the University of Maryland, through its Master Plan, has proposed creating a greener, more pedestrian-friendly campus center by closing a section of Campus Drive to most or all vehicular traffic. The University must decide if the concept of a pedestrian-friendly campus core centered on Campus Drive will continue to be included in the plan. To help in making this decision, a plan to pilot the Master Plan vision was proposed. However, during the discussion of the pilot, it became clear that there are two visions for the Campus Drive central core. These competing visions are described below. The pilot project will address both visions.

Vision 1

This plan would restrict access to Campus Drive between the M Circle and Cole Field House in order to create a beautiful, nearly traffic-free pedestrian mall in the center of campus where pedestrians and cyclists are safe from vehicular traffic and can travel and relax unencumbered by cars and buses. The University of Maryland has envisioned an automobile-free central plaza or mall along what is now Campus Drive for decades in order to create something that really doesn't exist now: a true "campus center." Creating such a space focuses on a pedestrian-friendly design that does away with streets and sidewalks.

This vision calls for nothing less than a change in the environment of what will become the true central heart of campus. Imagine being able to walk, meet, sit, surf the net, enjoy entertainment and much more in a space that is virtually traffic-free and environmentally friendly.

Of course, there would still be traffic on campus -- it would simply be diverted around this core mall area. As proposed, this pedestrian-friendly mall would flow into a plaza from Cole Field House, across to the Health Center and Stamp Student Union, down to Hornbake Plaza, across to the new teaching center, and then end at the M Circle.

Vision 2

This plan would dedicate Campus Drive as a centralized mass transit corridor, facilitating the movement of the Shuttle-UM buses and other forms of public transportation through the campus by limiting access for private vehicles. This second vision -- that of a transportation corridor -- reflects the reality that Campus Drive is the central road for campus commuters and a traffic cut-through for the larger community traveling to and from Route 1 and Adelphi Road. It is the path taken by Metro buses, and has been suggested as one possible alignment for the Purple Line. In giving access only to public transportation and the university's shuttle buses, the "campus center" would have more of the flavor of an urban street. Restricting private vehicles may encourage the use of public transportation.

The University has discussed the relative merits of both visions for several years. In order to deliver a new, informed and well-conceived Facilities Master Plan to the Board of Regents by September 2011, however, the university will test both concepts. This summer presents the only window of opportunity to test the challenges that will occur with limiting access to Campus Drive for any period of time and ultimately developing the metrics and data that are critical to making an informed decision that will shape a new Facilities Master Plan.

Campus Drive Restricted Access Plans

The University will limit access to the central portion of Campus Drive -- from the M Circle to the intersection of Cole Field House and Union Drive -- for two consecutive four-week periods. From June 19 to July 16, Campus Drive would be open only to the Metro buses, Shuttle-UM, emergency vehicles, paratransit vehicles, delivery trucks, facilities maintenance vehicles and construction vehicles. On the afternoon of July 4, Campus Drive will open to all vehicles for the annual fireworks display. From July 17 to August 13, Campus Drive will close to Metro bus and Shuttle-UM, leaving access during this period only to internal Campus Connector, paratransit, emergency, construction, delivery and maintenance vehicles.

June 19 was chosen as the start date because it follows National History Day -- a week-long history competition with many visitors from across the nation that the university hosts annually. By ending the test on August 13, the university will ensure that Campus Drive and all Shuttle-UM/Metro services will be returned to normal before students begin returning for the Fall 2010 semester.

Frequently Asked Questions

The following will help to answer some of the most frequently asked questions surrounding this test period.

What does the current UM Facilities Master Plan say about vehicular traffic on campus?

The current Facilities Master Plan (as updated in 2007) established four principles or goals to guide future development:

- Plan the built and natural environment in a way that preserves the beauty of the campus and protects the environment;
- Reduce the number of automobiles on campus and eliminate vehicular congestion to the extent possible while promoting unimpeded movement across campus;
- Reinforce the campus's role as a good neighbor in the larger community by the careful development of sites on the campus periphery or in outlying areas that link us to the community; and
- Preserve the architectural heritage of the campus and enhance its beauty through open spaces, gathering places, vistas of green lawn and trees, and groupings of buildings that promote a sense of community.

In addition, the plan proposes an internal campus shuttle, and restricts the Shuttle-UM and other vehicles from Campus Drive as a way of establishing a pedestrian-friendly core.

DETAILS OF THE TEMPORARY RESTRICTED ACCESS PLAN

What are the dates of restricted access and why were they chosen?

- Access to the central portion of Campus Drive will be restricted in two four-week increments from June 19 to August 13 (a total of eight weeks) with the exception of the afternoon of Sunday, July 4. June 19 was chosen as the start date because it follows National History Day -- a week-long history competition with many visitors from across the nation that the university hosts annually. By ending the test on August 13, the university will ensure that Campus Drive will be returned to current uses before students begin returning for the Fall 2010 semester.

How will restricting access to Campus Drive impact traffic – including the Shuttle-UM and Metro buses?

- From July 17 through August 13 Campus Drive will be closed to regular traffic (except as noted below), as well as to the regional Shuttle-UM and Metro buses. Buses and

private cars will be routed from Campus Drive to Regents Drive and a new Shuttle-UM hub will be established at the Regents Drive garage.

- Metro buses will continue to use stops on Route 1, and a new bus stop has been proposed for Mowatt Lane and Campus Drive.
- The Campus Connector will operate during this time throughout campus, including on Campus Drive.
- Prior to this more restrictive period, beginning June 19 and ending July 16, private cars will still be banned from the central portion of Campus Drive, but all Shuttle-UM and Metro buses will be allowed.

How will traffic be rerouted?

Campus Drive will be restricted west of the M Circle to just east of Cole Field House. In addition, there will be a change in traffic flow on Union Lane -- from one-way north to one-way south so that drivers can access the Union Lane Garage.

The Regents Drive parking garage will serve as the new bus transportation hub on campus during the second four weeks of the pilot period. Riders can then transfer to a Campus Connector bus that runs on a loop to reach the buildings around Campus Drive.

Plans call for these North and South Campus Connector buses to loop every 30 minutes. In the evening, two other bus lines will replace the Campus Connectors and run on Campus Drive.

Lot HH parking will be moved to Lot Z and Lot H parking to Regents Drive garage.

What vehicles will be allowed on Campus Drive during both periods?

- Campus Connector bus
- Paratransit and one-time special purpose traffic run by UM
- Emergency vehicles
- Private vehicles transporting emergency patients to the Health Center
- Vehicles for required service access (building and facility access that can only be reached by going into a closed section: facilities management shops, mail and other deliveries, solid waste vehicles and construction vehicles,
- Untagged scooters and bicycles

What about handicapped parking and on-campus transportation?

Twenty-one handicapped-accessible parking spaces will be relocated during the eight-week test period: 11 parking spaces near the Cole Student Activities Building and 10 spaces in Lot H. Relocated spaces include: 11 spaces just west of the closure by Cole, 4 spots behind Hornbake Library (across from the loading dock), 4 in Lot L (by the Mitchell Building), and 2 on Regents Drive (near Symons Hall).

- The two Campus Connector shuttles will be handicapped-accessible. Students using paratransit will continue to have access to Campus Drive throughout the pilot program.

How will you help drivers deal with all the changes?

- The University will undertake a public information campaign through all campus media, increase signage and take whatever other steps necessary to help make this period as easy as possible for everyone.

How do you answer critics who say routing traffic down Regents Drive will make students less safe due to the creation of a larger bus hub there? How will you deal with the lighting issues on Regents Drive?

- The safety of our campus community is paramount and has remained a high priority as we developed plans for restricting access to Campus Drive this summer. We are reviewing the lighting issues and will take appropriate steps to ensure that student and visitor safety is enhanced where necessary.

EVALUATION

How will you evaluate the effects of the test periods?

- The University is in the process of selecting a transportation consultant to help develop the metrics and other information needed to evaluate this eight-week test period. The consultant will not only provide a detailed analysis, but also offer recommendations about what worked and what did not. More important, the consultant will provide the university with the data needed to update the Facilities Master Plan.
- The Facilities Master Plan Steering Committee will take information from the consultant and many other sources to determine which vision of the “campus center” should be incorporated into the updated Facilities Master Plan. In addition, the University of Maryland will actively solicit your views and experiences during the eight-week restricted access period. To offer feedback, or get more detailed information about the restricted access plan, visit <http://www.facilities.umd.edu/CampusDrive>.
- A final report is due in September, with a decision expected by Spring 2011, when the new Facilities Master Plan for 2011-2030 is unveiled.

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