

Sustainable Transportation at Calvin

Sarah Holland and Jenna Beauchamp

What is Sustainable Transportation?

The Brundtland Commission defines sustainable development as something which “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Specifically sustainable transportation is “about finding ways to move people, goods and information in ways that reduce its impact on the environment, economy and society” (New Zealand Ministry for the Environment). At Calvin the interest in sustainability has been growing, especially in the area of transportation. Calvin students and faculty are becoming more aware of how their transportation choices impact the Grand Rapids community and the environment in general.



Proposition

Calvin should make changes to the way the campus operates with regard to transportation policies; focusing on more than just the automobile. Currently, our campus is designed for the car with only one driver. Evidence of this mindset is the staggering 3,000 parking permits (out of 4,300 students) which have been sold this year. Parking is the most noticeable transportation issue because it takes up the most space, but many other issues are just as imperative in promoting sustainable practices. For example, encouraging people to ride the bus or bike instead of driving by themselves promotes environmental and individual health by reducing emissions.



Ways to Increase Sustainability on Campus

- Create on-street parking instead of adding more parking lots
 - Calvin spends \$60,000 each year to maintain and care for their parking lots
 - Calvin has 20 parking lots totaling 27 acres
 - With the construction of the new Health and Wellness Center more green space will be turned into parking
- Reduce the campus speed limit to a uniform 15 mph
 - Speed limits on campus vary, confusing drivers
 - Slower is safer
- Apply sustainable transportation ideas to Campus Safety (fuel efficient vehicles, and biking)
 - In a given day, campus safety may drive from 190-240 miles using approx. 4 gallons of gas daily.
- Develop bike lanes on and leading to campus to encourage bicycling
 - The energy efficiency of cycling is estimated as the equivalent of a car doing 1600 miles on a gallon of gas
 - 10 bicycles can be parked in the same space required for one car
 - Bicycles belong on the street; drivers are not looking for fast moving vehicles on the sidewalk
- Continue to make riding The Rapid a more viable choice
 - A car driver switching to train or bus may cut their pollution by 95%
 - For every mile traveled, public transportation uses about one half of the fuel consumed by automobiles, and about a third of that used by sport utility vehicles and light trucks.
- Increase parking permit costs to raise awareness and help offset the cost of subsidizing The Rapid
 - For every dollar invested on public transportation, it can generate from \$4-9 dollars in the local economy.
- Encourage car/van pooling
 - If two drivers shared a car, they would reduce their overall pollution by 60%

Conclusion

In order to be good stewards of the earth, Calvin needs to be actively involved in promoting sustainable transportation. As a Christian educational institution, Calvin should be a front-runner in developing practices on their campus that support shalom in the environment and in the surrounding community.