

third  
dimension parking

# UNL tries to cope with parking

By Theresa Forsman

Finding a place to park on the UNL campuses is not a problem—compared with the parking situation at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) or the University of Nebraska Medical Center, according to Robert Pazderka, NU's capital construction coordinator.

"They literally park over everything at UNO," Pazderka said. There is no parking plan for the medical center, he added, because the campus just "grew like Topsy."

Apparently, Nebraska state legislators agree that parking is a low priority on UNL's budget list. The state has taken the position that tax funds will not be used to provide public parking, explained Ray Coffey, assistant manager in UNL's business and finance office.

The university is trying to get the Legislators to change the policy of no funds for parking in the form of a request in this year's capital construction budget to provide a 750-vehicle parking structure for UNO and the medical center, Pazderka said.

### Little chance for state money

The chances of the request being granted are practically zero, Pazderka said, because approval would set a precedent. If the state financed parking for the Omaha campuses, they would be expected to provide the same for the Lincoln campuses, he explained.

Hal Allen, chairman of UNL's Parking Advisory Board and information officer for the University Extension Division, disagrees that parking should be considered a low-priority item at UNL.

"One of the biggest things which needs to be done here is to reevaluate the whole campus plan and decide what we will do about parking," Allen said. "There is no complete, comprehensive method of dealing with parking," he added.

The campus plan Allen referred to is a projected physical plan for the UNL campuses based on a student population of 25,000. The plan was drawn up in 1966 by the Lincoln architectural firm of Caudill, Rowlett and Scott. The plan depicts the "ideal UNL campus," according to Coffey. In this ideal plan all traffic is routed around the City Campus, and parking is provided around its perimeter. The plan allows for approximately one and one-half times the 8,500 spaces now available on the two campuses.

Meanwhile, UNL is attempting to deal with the tight parking problem, Coffey said. The university recently has purchased or leased three lots near campus to provide "a few hundred" additional parking spaces. These new spaces and the 1,000 spaces available free this year at the State Fairgrounds indicates there are enough parking spaces for UNL faculty and staff members and students.

However, people cannot always park their cars close to the building in which they are working or going to class, Allen said, since parking in the center of the campus is at a premium.

"The only way to alleviate this problem would be to build multi-level parking structures," Allen said.

This idea has been studied by university administrators, Coffey said, but for now the plan has been rejected as economically unfeasible.

Since tax funds could not be used for the parking garages, Pazderka explained, they would have to be paid for by revenue bonds. This means the garages would have to generate enough income to be self-supporting. This translates into a \$200 yearly parking permit fee, since the cost of building a parking garage is approximately \$3,000 for each vehicle space, Coffey said.

### Outside parking would be removed

If parking garages were built on the campus, all other parking spaces would have to be removed, because, as Coffey put it, "I'm not going to pay \$200 to park as long as I can park outside."

Coffey said advantages of the parking garages include:  
—Additional parking spaces without requiring more land.

—The appearance of the parking garages would match the appearance of other buildings on campus.

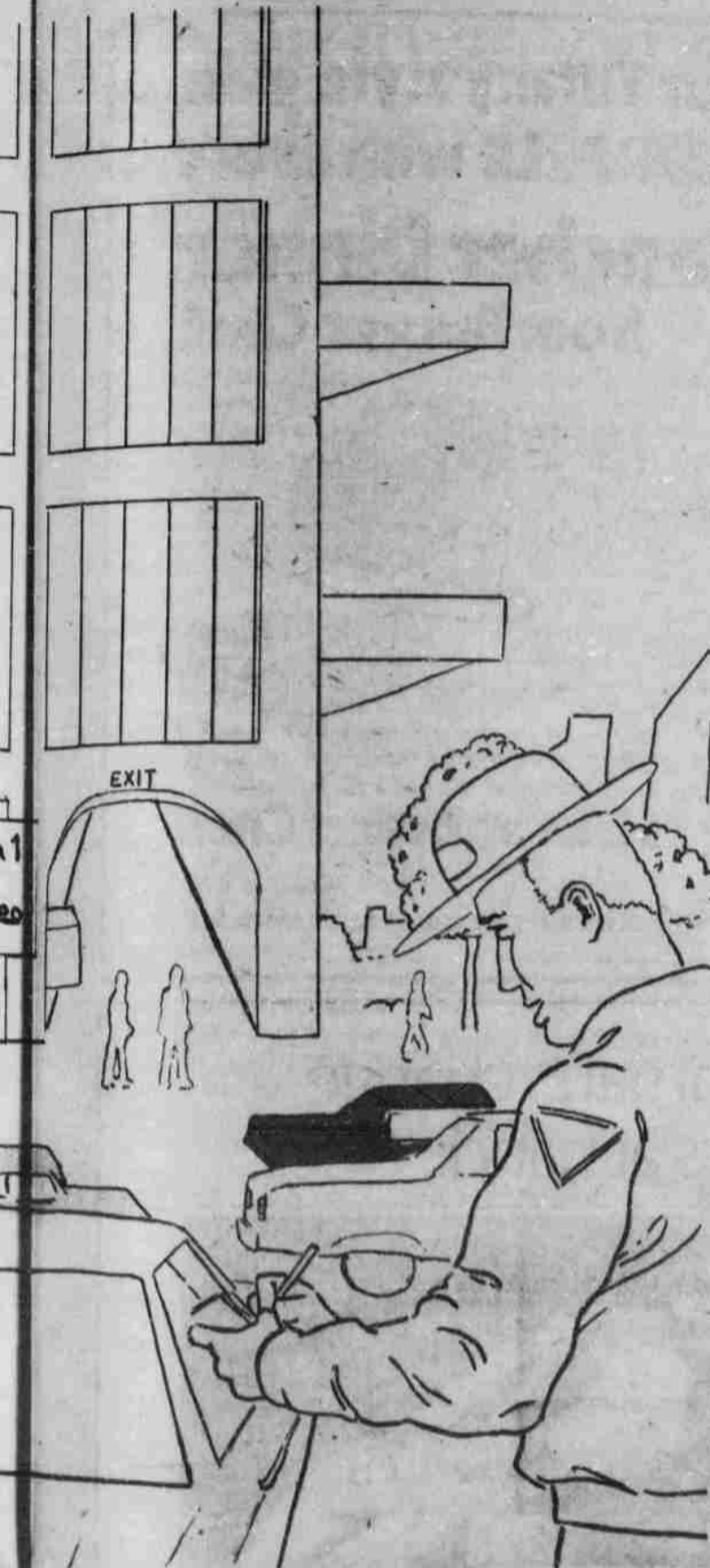
—Current parking lots could provide additional classroom or office space or could be landscaped.

—Since the garages are compact, more people could park in close proximity to their class or office.

So, its either a walk to class or a \$200 parking permit. There has to be a better way.

But it doesn't seem to be car pools. Coffey said the university tried to form car pools two years ago, but received very little student and faculty member response.

Pazderka suggested that higher gasoline prices after the November election may solve part of the parking problem.



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