

Thomas Duan

Professor Briana Westmacott

LING 12

08 March 2023

Transportation Problems at UCSB

I am Thomas, a second-year undergraduate who lives in Goleta due to a housing shortage. My commute time to school is almost 2 hours every day since buses are always late, and I got hit by cars twice when riding the bike last year. I believe many students like me would consider transportation as a crucial issue at UCSB. Bus services never run on accurate schedules, bike routes are dangerous and inconvenient, and car expenses are too high for us to spend. These are just a few examples of problematic transportation systems, making students always struggle to commute back and forth to the campus.

First and foremost, the bus services, operated by the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District (MTD), never follow the schedules and make students frustrated. For example, my apartment is a 20 minutes bus ride away from campus, but I typically have to wait another 20 minutes for it even though Google Maps suggests it is arriving. There is also a very common phenomenon I would call “ghost bus,” meaning sometimes the bus never shows up as the schedule tells. Although there are multiple routes passing through, those buses often come to the station together, hence forcing me to wait another 30 minutes for the next one. A lot of students are living in apartments or dorms that require them to take the bus to their lectures,

appointments, and even exams, but inaccurate schedules of buses can ruin their timetables and make them late for important meetings.

Besides buses, biking is another popular way of transportation for students, but there are still many drawbacks to riding a bike. While it is already very hard to get a new bike in new quarters, bike thieves are stealing those bicycles in the blink of an eye. As reported in the Daily Nexus, there were 76 reported bike thefts in the first 30 days after the move-in weekend in the fall quarter of 2021 (Jia and Rudolph). Moreover, there are some issues with the bike lanes. For instance, on the path from Santa Catalina to the campus, there are many uphill and downhill while the driveway is flat, making students feel tired when they arrive at the campus. Talking about on-campus lanes, if I want to go to Broida Hall from Givertz Hall with my bike, I have to make a detour around multiple buildings, while I can walk straight through the library to get there at nearly the same time. Not to mention I have to share roads with cars on some of the roads where I was injured by a car once. Biking should be a safe, convenient, and enjoyable way of getting around campus, not a frustration and anxiety generator that discourages students from choosing biking as their transportation option.

For some students, buying a car is a great option, for they can go to campus quicker and have more travel choices on weekends. However, purchasing a car is very expensive, along with high gas prices and expensive parking permits. According to Cox Automotive, new car buyers have to pay an unprecedented \$777 per month on average, which is almost twice as much as two years ago. Even for used cars, the average monthly payment has risen to \$544 (Welch and Naughton). Gas prices in Santa Barbara County have reached a new high, with some gas stations charging \$7 per gallon on October 2022 (Cruz). There is also a great deal of expense on the

campus parking permits. My friend who owns a car said, “I have to pay \$760 for 9-month parking close to my dorm, or I have to walk for 10 minutes to get my car. That is crazy expensive.” All of these costs make it impossible for students to afford a car in Santa Barbara.

As the campus continues to grow, transportation will remain a critical issue for everyone. The university and MTD need to work together to find better bus schedules, the university should consider redesigning bike lanes that are safer and easier to ride, and the Transportation & Parking Services at UCSB should focus more on lowering parking permit prices. With improved transportation systems, I believe students can have a more convenient life studying at UCSB.

Works Cited

Jia, Stella, and Alex Rudolph. "On-Campus Bike Thefts Increase from Previous Years." *The*

Daily Nexus, 7 Nov. 2021,

dailynexus.com/2021-11-07/on-campus-bike-thefts-increase-from-previous-years/.

Accessed 8 Mar. 2023.

Welch, David, and Keith Naughton. "New Cars Are Only for the Rich Now as Automakers Rake in Profits." *Bloomberg.com*, 14 Feb. 2023,

www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2023-02-14/new-car-prices-are-so-high-only-rich-americans-can-afford-them. Accessed 8 Mar. 2023.

Cruz, Ryan P. "After Months on the Decline, Santa Barbara Gas Prices Surge Again." *The Santa Barbara Independent*, 7 Oct. 2022,

www.independent.com/2022/10/07/after-months-on-the-decline-santa-barbara-gas-prices-surge-again/. Accessed 8 Mar. 2023.