

Town and Gown Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2025 | 3:00 p.m. | Virtual (Zoom)

1. Call to Order

Co-Chair **Jeremy Battjes** called the meeting to order at **3:04 p.m.**

2. Roll Call

Present:

- Sarah Moore, City Council Member, Ward 2
- Elizabeth Gunderman, University of Arkansas Student (Off-Campus)
- DeeDee Peters, Community Member
- Alan Wilbourn, Executive Director of Communications, Fayetteville Public Schools
- Gracie Ziegler, Chief Communications Officer, City of Fayetteville
- Peter Nierengarten, Environmental Director, City of Fayetteville (Co-Chair)
- Jonathan Curth, Development Services Director, City of Fayetteville
- Jeremy Battjes, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, University of Arkansas (Co-Chair)
- Mark Rushing, Associate Vice Chancellor for University Relations, University of Arkansas
- Clayton Hamilton, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Campus Services, University of Arkansas
- Jack Avery, Community Member
- Erik Breidinger, President, Graduate Professional Student Congress

Proxy:

- Parker Ryden, proxy for Amanda Hux, ASG President

3. Approval of Minutes – July 2025 Meeting

Motion: Sarah Moore

Second: Clayton Hamilton

Vote: Approved unanimously by voice vote

4. Approval of Agenda – October 27, 2025

Motion: Alan Wilbourn

Second: Jonathan Curth

Vote: Approved unanimously by voice vote

5. Introductions

Due to recent membership changes, the committee conducted brief introductions of city, university, student, and community representatives.

6. Old Business

6a. Razorback Transit Update – Adam Waddell

Adam Waddell provided an update on Razorback Transit service enhancements and ridership trends.

Highlights included:

- Razorback Transit is fully staffed for the first time in approximately 30 years, enabling expanded service.
- Overall ridership increased approximately **14.5%** year-over-year.
- Peak daily trips increased approximately **27%**; Saturday ridership increased approximately **25%**.
- Total annual service hours are projected to increase by more than **11,500 hours**.
- The fleet will expand by approximately **six buses** during the fiscal year, including articulated buses.

Operational changes discussed:

- Extension of non-academic service hours from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. year-round.
- Separation of previously interlined routes to improve frequency and reliability.
- Restructuring of Route 44 into Routes 45 and 46 to mitigate MLK interchange construction impacts.
- Introduction of express service to **Lot 500**, resulting in a **31% increase** in trips; capacity constraints remain due to high demand.
- Improved service reliability in West Fayetteville following completion of the Weddington interchange.

Discussion:

- Committee members discussed housing location trends and their relationship to ridership shifts.
- Adam noted that approximately **80%** of riders are university-affiliated and **20%** are non-university riders, underscoring community-wide benefits.
- The ongoing transit study remains in data collection and peer review, with recommendations anticipated by the end of the year. Some recommendations will be phased and dependent on infrastructure projects.

Next steps:

- The presentation will be shared with City staff for inclusion in meeting materials and potential distribution to transportation-related committees.

6b. University of Arkansas Enrollment and Housing Update – Jeremy Battjes

Jeremy Battjes shared preliminary **11th-day enrollment and housing data**, noting figures are pending ADHE approval.

Preliminary enrollment:

- Total enrollment: **34,175**

- Undergraduate students: **29,262**
- New freshman class: **6,974**
- Graduate students: **4,512**
- Law students: **376**
- Agricultural Law students: **25**
- Record Arkansas enrollment of **16,600+**, with more Arkansas students than non-Arkansas students.

Housing status:

- Approximately **98% occupancy** across on-campus housing and master-leased properties.
- Total master-leased beds: **1,257**, including The Cardinal, The Locale, and The Marshall.
- Staffing models vary by property; The Cardinal includes full-time live-in staff and expanded RA coverage.
- A cooperative agreement establishes **UAPD jurisdiction** at The Cardinal; other properties fall under City jurisdiction.

Future housing and parking plans:

- Two new traditional residence halls are planned:
 - **Maple Hill Central**: 746 beds, opening Fall 2028
 - **Cleveland Street/HOTS site**: minimum 680 beds, opening Fall 2029
- The University's long-term goal is to transition away from the master-lease model.
- Parking strategies include:
 - A new parking garage adding approximately **1,400 spaces** (target July 2029)
 - Surface parking east of Garland Street adding approximately **180 spaces** (target Fall 2026)
 - Real-time parking availability technology
 - Transition to **ParkMobile**
 - **Safe Ride Sunday**, an on-demand shuttle pilot for on-campus residents

Stormwater considerations:

Stormwater management is incorporated into project planning; additional technical detail will be provided at a future meeting.

6c. Meeting Frequency Discussion – Peter Nierengarten & Jeremy Battjes

Co-Chairs introduced a proposal to reconsider the committee's meeting cadence.

Discussion included:

- A proposal to increase meetings from quarterly to up to **six meetings per year**.
- Potential scheduling of additional meetings during the spring and fall academic terms.
- Interest in holding a **summer meeting**, with discussion of in-person versus virtual formats.
- Strong support for a **hybrid summer meeting option** to ensure student participation while retaining the benefits of in-person engagement.
- Recognition of the value of in-person meetings for site visits and contextual understanding of campus projects.

Outcome:

No formal action was taken. The Co-Chairs will continue gathering feedback and return with a refined proposal for future consideration. The **January 26, 2026** meeting remains scheduled and virtual.

7. New Business

7a. Fayetteville Public Schools Update – Alan Wilbourn

Alan Wilbourn provided updates on Fayetteville Public Schools construction and transportation planning.

Fayetteville High School Parking Deck:

- Construction is underway; completion is scheduled for **April 2027**.
- The project will add **450 parking spaces**:
 - 300 for faculty and staff (lower levels, Stadium Drive access)
 - 150 for students (top level, Bulldog Boulevard access)
- Student parking capacity is projected to increase from approximately **550 to nearly 1,000 spaces** by the 2027–28 school year.
- No significant construction-related closures affecting spring athletics are anticipated.

Transportation discussion:

- Committee members discussed affordability, access, and equity considerations for students without vehicles.
- FPS continues outreach encouraging bus use and is exploring **activity bus** options, particularly in conjunction with new feeder patterns.

Woodland Junior High School:

- Construction is underway near Joyce Boulevard and Crossover Road.
- Joyce Street will be realigned with roundabouts to improve traffic flow.
- The school is scheduled to open in **August 2027**.
- Long-term planning includes conversion of the Ramey campus to a magnet high school, projected to reduce Fayetteville High School enrollment pressure by approximately **800 students**.

7b. addressed through 6b

7c. Fayetteville 2026 Bond Election – Gracie Ziegler

Gracie Ziegler provided an overview of the City's proposed bond election scheduled for **March 3, 2026**.

Overview:

- Nine total ballot questions, including refinancing and eight investment areas:
 1. Water and Sewer
 2. Parks and Recreation
 3. Animal Services Facility
 4. Pedestrian Infrastructure and Trails

5. Roads and Transportation
 6. Recycling and Sustainability
 7. Aquatic Recreation Center
 8. Fire Facilities and Equipment
- Projects are aligned with City Plan 2040 and supported by feasibility and rate studies.

Discussion:

- A question was raised regarding historical discussions about university contributions toward fire services.
- No current proposals are under consideration; future dialogue may occur.

8. Public Comment

No public comment was offered.

9. Next Meeting

January 26, 2026 | 3:00 p.m. | Virtual

10. Adjournment

Motion: Jeremy Battjes

Second: Jonathan Curth

Vote: Approved unanimously

The meeting adjourned at approximately **4:03 p.m.**