

New study examines traffic congestion on a university campus

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Some researchers believe that the United States is in a “congestion crisis”. Indeed, national transportation statistics indicate that 42 percent more vehicles used each urban lane mile in 2000 than in 1980, tripling the number of hours people spent in traffic delays, according to a 2002 report by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

In a recent study published in *Planning for Higher Education*, Dr. David H. Kaplan, professor of geography at Kent State University, and Thomas Clapper, general manager of transportation services at Kent State, examined the special characteristics of traffic congestion in a university setting.

“The university itself becomes a major traffic generator in a way that is significantly different from standard peak hour commuting traffic,” says Kaplan. “Campuses are large and they contain places to work, learn, socialize and live—each with its own trip purpose.”

Examining traffic congestion around Kent State University, a large, Midwestern, state university of 25,000 students in Kent, Ohio, the study reflected conditions on other campuses around the country, since many of the largest college and university campuses are found in towns of fewer than 50,000 residents. In addition, the study addressed the components driving this congestion and the best way to reduce traffic congestion

“Congestion improvements require either an increase in capacity or a

reduction in demand,” says Kaplan. Results suggest that universities can either increase roadway capacity or reduce demand by using methods such as parking management, class scheduling, placement and scheduling of special activities on campus, and promotion of walking, bicycling and bus service.

Source: Kent State University

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