



MEMORANDUM

To: City Council
Fr: Chapin Spencer, Director, Public Works
Kelly Devine, Director, Burlington Business Association
Diana Colangelo, Economic Development Specialist, CEDO
Andy Hill, Desman Associates
Re: Downtown Parking & Transportation Plan and Recent Revisions Based on Public Input
Date: December 14, 2015

Thank you for inviting us to the December 21st City Council meeting to present the final draft plan for your acceptance.

With support from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and the business community, the City has worked with the Parking Advisory Committee, the consulting team and the Burlington Business Association to advance pilot projects, public outreach, and a forward-looking plan to improve the parking system in downtown Burlington. Each recommendation will still have to go through its normal approval process to be implemented – requiring additional public process and consideration.

Public Input:

From this past mid-October to mid-November, the draft Downtown Parking and Transportation Management Plan was posted online for public comment and reviewed at a public forum on November 3. The changes below have been made to the Plan based on feedback received from the online comment tool, emails received by the parking team, comments recorded at the public forum, and other forms of input over the months of October and November 2015. The detailed description of the public engagement activities is in an attached document. The numbers in parentheses refer to the sections within the plan where each of the changes has been made.

Recent Revisions:

1. **Sunday Parking Enforcement (5.4.2.2.1):** A wide range of comments was received on the proposal to charge for parking on Sundays – from not wanting to pay on Sundays to

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not wanting to start enforcement at noon based on the needs of the faith-based communities.

- a. The report was made more explicit the reasons for charging on Sundays. Historically, Sunday parking in Burlington has been free. With more activities happening on Sundays, occupancy counts over the last year have shown high rates of on-street and some off-street utilization. Charging in high-demand parking areas during high-occupancy periods helps create turnover and availability. For this reason, this report recommends charging on Sundays at high occupancy locations during high-occupancy times. As changes occur over time regarding enforcement of certain parking spots at certain times on Sundays, re-evaluation will be periodically necessary – especially after the next year of data collection. Sunday on-street enforcement in the downtown is supported by data indicating that by late morning, utilization of on-street spaces across the downtown approaches and sometimes exceeds the 85% target. There were few available spaces by noon on most Sundays that were studied within the downtown core, a condition that persists till later in the evening. (Appendices A3 and A5.)
 - b. The report was made more explicit the data-driven reasons for enforcing on-street starting at Noon. The recommendation to begin on-street enforcement at 12:00PM has been retained based on initial occupancy data and due to the fact that data is needed after enforcement in the afternoon begins on parking occupancies in the late morning. Public input has been varied with some wanting no enforcement and some wanting earlier enforcement. We will use data to make future adjustments. If after a year of data collection occupancy counts warrant an earlier enforcement start time, the City will analyze and debate this change.
 - c. The plan contains a new recommendation for a free parking program in municipal garages on Sundays for City of Burlington residents, based on the Portsmouth, NH model. This recommendation seeks to address public and Councilor concern about Sunday enforcement as a compromise. This is not a data-driven recommendation.
2. **Downtown Residents' Parking Options** (5.4.2.11.1): A number of downtown residents expressed that their needs were not adequately addressed in the plan.
- a. The plan was revised to better address parking and transportation needs of downtown residents. A specific section has been added to the recommended changes to account for their needs. Whatever entity ultimately manages parking in Burlington's downtown, they need to have a specific set of services and tools to offer downtown residents.
 - i. Peak excess and off-peak capacity in garages and potentially surface lots, both private and publicly owned, should be a leasing or pay-by-night opportunity for downtown residents.
 - ii. Traffic Demand Management strategies should be offered and enabled for downtown residents, including convenient access to transit, car share, and increased investment in walking and biking amenities.

- iii. A 'parking broker' with BBA / Go!Burlington can assist in helping match parking needs with available supply.
 - iv. The report called out that a large amount of parking spaces Downtown is still free after 6PM. (Most of the on-street system.)
3. **Transition Areas (5.4.2.12):** Respondents wanted clearer language about the connection between the downtown and residential parking systems and managing potential impacts between them.
 - a. Language was added to more specifically call out the recommendations of the Residential Parking Plan and how the management tools in the two plans can work together.
4. **Event Permits/Meter Hoods (5.4.1.5):** Concern was expressed that the meter hood program was not operating optimally.
 - a. Based on feedback, there is now a recommendation to streamline the process for getting an event permit, and putting that system online, consistent with models across the country.
 - b. It is also recommended that the process include an appropriate fee for event permits to prevent program abuse, based on the models of other cities.
 - c. A sentence has also been added to urge the City to coordinate its construction-related meter hood requests in efforts to prevent a section of the downtown being overwhelmed with temporarily inaccessible parking.
5. **Downtown Employees (5.4.2.9 and 5.4.2.9.1):** Public feedback was particularly concerned with low-wage earners.
 - a. Language has been added to acknowledge that Downtown employees are an important driver of the economy and options for their specific parking and transportation needs must be provided. Options include flat-rate parking during evenings in certain garages; the retention of significant free parking assets after 6:00PM; pre-loaded pass cards for employees at certain garages; a downtown-wide TDM effort to serve downtown employers; increased investments in multi-modal transportation; increased access to privately controlled parking through a parking broker; improved safety at certain parking facilities; and increased ease of access to multiple modes of transportation and information for downtown employees. The plan also recommends the City work with CCTA, other regional entities and large employers to develop park and rides served by transit.
6. **Parking Facility Design (3.2):** Input was shared that new parking facilities should be carefully designed for a positive user experience while not degrading the streetscape
 - a. Language was added to clarify that new parking facilities should have great design, with a balance between efficiency, urban design, and streetscape presence.
7. **Ongoing Public Input (5.4):** There has been feedback requesting a clear ongoing way for stakeholders such as downtown residents, seniors, employees to provide ongoing input into the parking and transportation system.
 - a. The plan has been modified to recommend that the Go!Burlington policy body be supported by representative advisory committee. The governing body is to be comprised of parking professionals with experience in parking policy and

management. There is also now a role for an advisory committee made up of diverse downtown stakeholders who do not necessarily know about parking as a discipline but have a stake in downtown transportation.

8. **Past Public/Private Partnerships** (5.4): The plan has been updated to reflect that Burlington's Parking and Transportation Council was an early and successful example of public/private partnership, and that future models should follow in its collaborative footsteps.
9. **Transportation Demand Management** (5.4): CATMA suggested additional revisions.
 - a. The plan has been changed to reflect clarifying feedback from CATMA.
10. **Car-sharing** (5.5): CarShare Vermont suggested additional revisions.
 - a. In response to feedback from CarShare Vermont, stronger language was added regarding support for car-share as a proven TDM strategy.

Please don't hesitate to contact any of us prior or after the City Council meeting. Thank you!