

July 22, 2021 Meeting of the City Council Stakeholder Committee

North Winooski Parking Management Plan Committee Members present:

- Councilors Barlow, Hanson, Stromberg
- Community members: Kirsten Merriman Shapiro (KMS), Maxwell Horowitz
- The project team: Nicole Losch (Burlington Department of Public Works), Jonathan Slason (RSG), Amy Burns (RSG), Marshall Distal (CCRPC)

Approximately 8 members of the public were present.

1. Welcome, Introductions, Changes to the Agenda
Charlie Sizemore (Committee member) can't make it but sent comments

Committee members- changes to agenda? No changes

Committee adheres to open meeting laws, meetings are warned and publicly broadcast. Materials available on line after conclusion. Procedures available in link

2. Public Comment Period
No one speaking during first opportunity
3. Parking Management Plan: Purpose, Goals
 - a. Jon reviewed the purpose and goal of the plan. That the corridor study recommendations will be installed. This work is about managing supply and demand, understanding essential parking needs.

Jon walked through PowerPoint. Presentation available online.

4. Phase A: Status and Findings

Councilor Barlow: are the side streets- off the corridor by 1 block?

Project Team: Yes, the corridor study area is the street itself and one-block either way. We want to have an initial goal of meeting parking needs within this area. If we expand the area, it introduces even more data, questions, and issues of where to finally draw the boundary.

Question: we are using car ownership data?

Project Team: will collect more in phase B with the survey. Census data on car ownership is used in phase A

Councilor Barlow: Where did the .75 parking spots for HH?

Project Team: That's a demand rate. There is always a probability that for any given day, the car may not be parked there. The result is that the observed parking rate is lower than vehicle ownership rate.

Greg Hostetler (member of public): How far away is parking garage downtown? - is that within 600'?

Project Team: It may be within that distance, but the garage has not been modeled. The issues being it is used by many others and then the issues of modeling those users, and the area keeps expanding.

Councilor Barlow: He used to frequent businesses on the southern end of the study area and there is a dynamic where you go around the block. The driver thinks, "should I take the open spot or should I go into the traffic?" Human nature element to taking the first available rather than chance it. This may reinforce why the actual parking may be higher on the Grant-North Section.

KMS: Compliment Jon on presentation. Appreciates the level of detail. Good starting place.

Jane Knodell (member of the public) - In the estimates of demand, did you include patrons of businesses? What about those people visiting residences?

Project Team: yes, in commercial table. All land uses combined but estimate of every business for employees and patrons of business. For the residential uses: yes, different rates for owners and guests.

5. Phase B: Introduction & Committee Discussion

Engagement and Survey

Jonathan discussed the approach on the survey being a central and significant aspect to engage a wide audience. The Corridor study already had a large public participation aspect from public meetings. Now it is about understanding who is affected these policies and really understand what policies and strategies may be most of interest in the study area. Online surveys have a disadvantage of language and internet access, but they have been successful getting a higher number of respondents than other methods.

Councilor Stromberg: Can we use QR codes?

Project Team: Yes, we will use them on lawn signs and postcards

Councilor Hanson: Survey itself will be further developed - will it be clear that this is not just for people who drive? I want to make sure this is relevant to everyone, not just drivers. Not parking focused.

Project Team: Correct, we need all users of the corridor (whether they pass through, live, or visit) the corridor. We will need to think through title/tag line. What is the right messaging to get that buy in?

Public Member suggestion: Simple language of transportation vs parking so broader understanding.

Councilor Barlow: Since surveying in summer, if you don't get the response rate will we amplify through direct canvassing or through other means? Bus advertising? etc? The lawn signs in non-campaign season might work.

Project team: fielding in central Vermont and did have to encourage- still in pandemic. We will monitor the respondents on a daily/weekly basis.

KMS: Are we going to places where you might find seniors? People with children? New immigrants? They may not understand why they may want to participate. More direct engagement and thoughtfulness.

Project Team: Good question, did reach out to City's Trusted Communities Voices program. They are off in July so we will catch them late- they have offered to give guidance to reach their communities, Might take different approach. Language isn't as easy to follow in a translated sense.

KMS: The Family Room - a cross section of folks with programs, provide survey in that format.

Project Team: good reminder. Also, day programs for seniors – key building to catch people who live in the area. Really working on engaging organizations that engage others. Let's get that list and call them up and distribute, etc. Any missing groups? Send them our way!

Ellen O'Brien: Reading level makes big difference of engagement .

KMS: Light on the jargon.

Schedule

Project team: described the situation we are in that by October the city needs to inform VTrans on the Winooski Avenue (Route 2/7 state roadway) designs. The state will incorporate the changes proposed by the city.

KMS: Repeat? Is there a funding source paying for striping/curbs?

Project Team: If curb moving and stormwater, more design work and more cost. Thus, need to get moving to give them that information.

Solveig Overby (member of public via chat): As part of the survey process, it would be helpful to know if the residents who have cars need to use them daily, whether to commute to work, drop children at school or day care, etc. In parking studies done during the development of Burlington's Residential Parking Management Program, it was determined that 25% of cars parked on streets with very limited parking were not moved for days. These folks might bike or walk in town so only need their car occasionally. If there was an option for convenient satellite parking, this could reduce some of the on-street vehicle storage that ties up parking spaces needed by folks who must park near their residence because they must use a car daily. The satellite parking should be made attractive in creative ways, with efficient transport (on bus line; Uber/taxi credits?) to the parking, and covered by solar panels keeping the snow off, making it appealing in winter: better than digging the car out for snow parking bans.

Project Team: Great strategy- this is how we see the process unfold.

KMS: Parking model for business- do you think it is useful to ground truth that to improve on the model to see if that's accurate?

Project Team: we reduced commercial parking rates as well- to get the model calibrated we adjusted the rates to about 50% of the national parking rates. Commercial side not as rich of a data set and covid has thrown it for a loop. Adjusted rate that seems to fit observational data, which was collected pre covid. Anyone's guess what happens 6 months from now. The team would be all ears if certain businesses should be observed over the next month. We can fact check the model.

KMS: Not sure which ones but Feeding Chittenden – we don't want to hamper their ability (or any non-profit in the study area) to serve community. Don't know specific places - is there a simple thing to ask for businesses? Sampling of businesses.

Project Team: Logic structure in the survey to ask live, work, own a biz- will be able to ask them in the survey. The survey respondent can answer with multiple checkboxes or just one. this way to get perspectives of who works, lives, visits, or all three in the corridor.

Councilor Hanson: Interest in teleworking. I can't think what businesses specifically in the corridor where this would most apply, but we should be aware and sensitive that some businesses will want to encourage and maintain a high teleworking environment – may want to revisit those businesses.

Project Team: We can ask about teleworking. Asking pre-covid is risky. Based on the job types and sectors in the corridor it doesn't appear to have a ton of potential for teleworking. However, there are some – such as Legal Aid for example. They are a larger employer (~20 staff) that could have some remote work. Plus, they seem to have a small parking supply. We have an opportunity – however, we don't want to tailor our solutions to specific businesses, we need to have some flexibility.

Councilor Hanson: With the timeline- makes him nervous. Timeline is has no room for delay/error. We would miss that Oct/Nov timeline.

Project Team: RSG explained some reasons for the delay on the analysis and holding this meeting. The result has that the timeline has been pushed tighter than it should be. The project

team is hopeful we will have enough info to know the general direction. Worst case, we may miss the opportunity to coordinate with state. However, if we can give them enough info that's what they are looking for by October.

Councilor Hanson: Council resolution had this going on the ground this year with bike lanes - the idea was let's make sure we have a plan in place to manage parking. Never meant to delay implementation. It concerns me- I don't know if there is any way to compress or shrink for some buffer. If anyone drops any ball, could be big consequences. I know it's already tight. Need wiggle room.

Project Team: Will go back to VTrans to understand timing and what they need.

Councilor Hanson: NPA meeting is 2nd Thursday in September. This will give us time to time to consider NPA feedback for committee to review. Suggested timeline- 9th review, meeting with NPA before the 23rd, September 23, approve.

Project Team: Tried to build time in for strategies. We can share info directly and the project team can be the connection between committee members.

KMS: Clarity upfront is helpful- there has been a decision already made by council to install bike lanes and very likely remove parking from Winooski. This is not about that decision but about how its managed in the future. Should be clear in survey intro. And at NPA meeting. Some people will be thrilled and some less thrilled. We should try to push out the schedule, as schedules may slip, plus VTRANS won't do the work in the winter. More meetings ok- will try to be available. If we get good response on survey, it will take time to analyze the results and make sense of it.

Councilor Barlow: Approach VTRANS and ask if they have flexibility.

Project Team: Will check for more flexibility.

Councilor Hanson: We have to present something to NPA before we approve it- I think its better to go to them in September. We go to them first and then approve it.

Project Team: continue conversations to expedite schedule to get those pieces out on a different schedule. Strategize those ideas.

Maxwell Horovitz: He is flexible on switching meetings but if we could get preliminary info to review before future meetings would help move things along.

Shared Charlie Sizemore's comments:

Unfortunately we had a staffing issue and I'm unlikely to be able to attend the meeting tonight. I've read the agenda and Draft Phase B, and thought I would write my thoughts, questions and concerns so they can be part of the record.

1. I think we should formalize what we mean by "focused engagement with targeted audiences." Specifically, I'd like to know HOW we intend to engage with Feeding Chittenden, The Community Health Center, and Outright Vermont as to how these changes will impact their ability to serve our community.
2. I'd like to reiterate my concern from our first meeting that these organizations are woefully omitted from this process, and say once again that if we move forward and in doing so hamper their ability to serve our community then we have failed.
3. I think there should be a review of the survey before it's finalized. This survey is crucially important to gauging the effect of these changes on NWA, and if not carefully crafted and executed could be a wasted opportunity.
4. Do we have specific plans as to how we will get feedback from working families, New Americans, and under-served members of our community via the survey? Can we devise a plan/work together with the non-profits on the NWA corridor to get survey feedback from the community members they serve?

That's it for me. Otherwise it looks great. Thanks to all of you for everything you do for Burlington!

Councilor Stromberg: Coming into the meeting she resonated with what Charlie had put in his emails, but is more comfortable after discussing and after the presentation.

KMS: How are we going to take in and weigh what happens at NPA meeting and outside survey engagements. Absorb feedback before it goes to council makes sense.

Project Team: The committee will take it into consideration

Public Comment

6. Public Comment Period- no comments

Committee Actions

7. Committee Discussion and Action: Approve Phase B Scope of Work

Approve phase B scope of work

Kirsten moves- seconded by Councilor Stromberg.

Project Team: will adjust schedule as suggested (swap NPA meeting and final Committee meeting)

Councilor Hanson: This is a strong process. Initially the study wasn't going to have this level of public engagement- I do think this is above and beyond what the Council was considering. He feels good about that. The NPA thing was our way of public feedback. This is taking it much further.

Motion passes unanimously.

8. Committee Action: Select 2 Members for Survey Review

Who is interested in being a review member?

Mid next week meeting and email dialog, and then meeting in August

Kirsten- nominates Charlie. If it doesn't work for him, Kirsten would do it

Counselor Hanson is interested.

Councilor Stromberg is interested by unavailable.

Councilor Barlow unavailable next week.

Max slightly unavailable while traveling.

Councilor Hanson and Charlie Sizemore (or Kirsten) are the members for survey development task.

9. Next Steps

Further survey amendments to discuss for call next week

Survey out the door

Analyzing further data

Project Team: asking Kirsten- will survey address your concern about additional parking data for businesses?

KMS: Reserve her judgment on that for now. Think about it.

KMS: will postcards get mailed to people within the yellow boundary? How to work with these agencies to get it to their clientele and users of these locations to participate in survey.

Project Team: Yes. And anyone can take the survey. The City will discuss with KMS as to best ways to contact and encourage participation in the survey.

Meeting adjourn: 7:55pm