



Legislation Text

File #: 100560., **Version:** 2

Downtown Parking Study (B)

As the downtown area continues to redevelop, the demand for parking is expected to increase. An adequate supply of parking and proper management of parking resources is important in ensuring the continued success of the downtown area today and into the future. Parking management will become even more important as the development of Innovation Square progresses and the downtown area becomes more urbanized. Encountering and addressing parking challenges is positive in the sense that it conveys vitality in the downtown area that is creating the need to address parking issues.

As mentioned when this item was considered by the CRA, "It is important to understand that the public perception about parking resources is often just as influential to this discussion as is the actual data related to parking supply, demand, and use." The CRA is attentive to issues related to parking resources, as parking infrastructure is an important component in attracting increased investment in urbanized areas. Successful redevelopment must attain a balance between accommodating a high demand for parking without sacrificing the human scale and people-oriented nature of the area. The CRA worked with parking consultants Rich & Associates in order to address parking issues downtown. The parking study is not conceptual in nature; rather it utilizes hard data, parking supply and demand measurements, stakeholder information, and sophisticated modeling techniques to understand and plan for current and future parking needs.

A final draft report on the Downtown Parking Study was presented to the CRA by Rich & Associates on September 21, 2009. The recommendation that was passed by the CRA was for the CRA to: 1) Hear a presentation from staff and consultants; 2) Provide input regarding the parking study recommendations. This information will be compiled by City/CRA staff and presented to the City Commission for action.

In August 2010, City Public Works and CRA staff met with Assistant City Manager Paul Folkers to develop an action plan for moving the Downtown Parking Study recommendations forward. In December, Public Works staff completed evaluation of the Downtown Parking Study recommendations and the compilation of staff recommendations for implementation. At the December 16, 2010 City Commission meeting, the City Commission referred the Study to the Recreation, Cultural Affairs, and Public Works Committee.

Staff has been meeting with internal and external stakeholders sharing draft staff recommendations, answering questions and seeking input. On July 11, 2011, the Recreation, Cultural Affairs & Public Works Committee received a presentation from staff on recommendations for implementing parking program changes in conjunction with the 2012 fiscal year.

Staff recommendations include:

- 1) Convert free on-street parking in the core downtown area including along Main Street to 2 (two) hour paid parking;
- 2) Extend hours of enforcement for on-street and off-street parking from 8:00 am until 11:00 pm Monday through Friday and from 5:00 pm until 11:00 pm Saturday;
- 3) Off-street parking time limit be 4 (four) hours;
- 4) Meter Lot 6 for Friday and Saturday parking;
- 5) Staff continue to monitor off-street lots in the northeast to determine when demands meet capacity for consideration of relocating city employees out of Lot 6;
- 6) Develop a marketing plan prior to and in conjunction with implementation of the new program, including website;
- 7) Proposed rates of \$0.50/hour for off-street lots with 4 (four) hour maximum, \$1.00/hour for on-street parking with 2 hour maximum, and no change in the parking garage rate structure.

The Recreation, Cultural Affairs & Public Works Committee discussed the staff recommendations above; specifically the issues surrounding city employee parking (including the possibility of charging city employees for parking), Saturday free parking hours, and the possibility of moving on-street reserved Alachua County parking were discussed at length. The Committee approved moving the staff recommendation on to the City Commission with the understanding that several issues would be discussed again with the full Commission.

The cost to implement the Downtown Parking Recommendations is projected to be approximately \$875,000 in capital costs and \$125,000 in annual recurring costs. Projected annual revenues are estimated to be \$490,000. It will take approximately 2 ½ years to pay for the capital costs. The projected revenue will cover the capital costs and the annual recurring operating costs.

The Recreation, Cultural Affairs & Public Works Committee to the City Commission - The City Commission: 1) approve staff recommendations number 1 through 7; and 2) direct staff to contact Alachua County Administration to discuss relocating the current reserved spaces around the Alachua County Administration Building to off-street parking locations.