

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 2, 2015

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER

DOCKET TITLE:

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Receipt of the report and recommendations of the Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS) Work Group, and the parking management work plan.

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ISSUE: Receipt of the report and recommendations of the Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS) Work Group, and the parking management work plan.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive the report and recommendations of the OTAPS Work Group and the associated parking management work plan.

BACKGROUND: In 2010, the City conducted the Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS) to assess the availability of parking, both on-street and off-street, three blocks north and south of King Street, between the Potomac River and the King Street Metro Station. One of the recommendations of this study was to create a task force of major stakeholders to review and make recommendations about potential parking management strategies. The OTAPS Work Group was established later that year and made recommendations, many of which were implemented, including the launch of a mobile parking application and the extension of meter hours.

The Work Group was reconvened in 2012 and developed additional recommendations for consideration, such as the installation of additional multi-space meters, and City monitoring of parking occupancy. In response, in the fall of 2014, the City collected new occupancy data. The OTAPS Work Group was reconvened in early 2015 to review the data and develop recommendations related to metered parking and residential permit parking in the study area. The Work Group met monthly from January 2015 through August 2015, and a summary of the Work Group discussions and recommendations are provided in the 2015 OTAPS Work Group Final Report (Attachment 1). Each meeting included a public comment component.

DISCUSSION: An analysis of the parking occupancy data collected in 2014 demonstrated that since 2009, overall metered parking has seen a slight increase in occupancy, overall on-street

parking occupancy has increased in residential areas on weekday evenings, and garage occupancy has decreased. A detailed description of trends can be found in the 2015 OTAPS Work Group Final Report.

In addition to occupancy trends, staff prepared background data for the Work Group to consider throughout their discussion of parking management in the study area. This detailed background information, which includes land use and economic trends, enforcement data, meter rate comparison among neighboring jurisdictions, and parking removed and added in the study area, is provided in Attachment 2.

As the Work Group reviewed staff's analysis, several issues and concerns related to parking management in the study area were identified and discussed. The most repeated concerns included parking in residential areas, sufficiency of parking for new waterfront developments, wayfinding, garage pricing relative to the price of on-street parking, the enforcement of existing parking regulations, and on-street parking regulations that do not account for differences in demand throughout the study area. Based on the concerns that were raised and available data and examples of best practices locally and nationally, the Work Group determined the following goals for improving parking management in the study area:

1. Encourage short-term visitors to park in metered areas rather than residential blocks;
2. Encourage long-term visitors to use transit and park in off-street garages and surface lots;
3. Preserve parking on residential blocks for residents and guests;
4. Encourage compliance at meters and in residential parking districts.

These parking management goals created the foundation for the Work Group's recommendations for implementation. Attachment 3 is the 2015 OTAPS Work Group Recommendations Chart, with recommendations tied to each parking management goal. Both the majority and minority positions expressed by Work Group members are provided in the summary, as well any formal motions that were made during the meetings. Work Group members expressed that their recommendations are intended to work together to improve parking management in the study area. The 2015 Work Group intended that their recommendations supersede those from the 2010 and 2012 OTAPS.

The Work Group discussed the topic of restricting new developments from receiving residential parking permits and held public comment on it at their May meeting. The motion from the May 27, 2015 meeting stated that "no universal restriction should be placed on the availability of residential parking permits in new residential developments in districts 1-5 and each DSUP be considered on its own merits with respect to the issuance of residential parking permits." Staff will provide a recommendation to City Council on the application of this parking management tool for individual developments through the development review process, and going forward, staff will require parking studies associated with development applications to examine whether or not this type of tool is appropriate for a given development.

In general, recommendations from the Work Group with the greatest level of majority agreement were parking management tools related to wayfinding, enforcement, and employee parking and transit programs. Taking into consideration the majority agreement of the Work Group, as well

as the fulfillment of the above parking management goals for the Old Town Area Parking Study area, staff has developed a draft implementation timeline, shown in Attachment 4. This timeline includes two immediate action items that can be implemented starting this Winter. The first action is to improve citywide parking information and marketing. To accomplish this, staff will work with Visit Alexandria and the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership to provide better marking of transit and parking options available in the City, including the City's pay by phone feature, Pango.

The second immediate action that could begin this winter is the implementation of a pilot program for adding pay-by-phone payment requirement for residential blocks, following public engagement with the residents of the proposed blocks. The pay by phone payment requirement would not apply to residents of the district where that block is located nor would it apply to those resident's guests. Potential blocks for a pilot program would likely be immediately adjacent to metered areas where on-street parking occupancy exceeds 85 percent during peak parking hours. Because a city code modification would be needed, this item would require a public hearing before the Traffic and Parking Board and City Council approval.

Beyond these two immediate projects, staff recommends implementation of several other Work Group recommendations in the short term to comprehensively approach parking management. It should also be noted that in general, these recommendations also received the greatest level of majority agreement from the Work Group as appropriate parking management tools. Because these items are not budgeted for FY 2016, they could be considered through the FY 2017 budget process, and would not be completed unless they are funded in an upcoming budget. The following is a list of the proposed short-term recommendations and approximate cost:

Wayfinding

- Provide and promote digital wayfinding with parking garage information through mobile applications and websites, and maintain a current City parking map.
- Add parking wayfinding signage consistent with the City's Wayfinding Plan guidelines.
- Explore adding appropriate real-time information for parking garage signs.
- Proposed capital cost: \$200,000
- Proposed annual operating cost: \$5,000

Enforcement

- Provide funding to modernize citation equipment.
- Reinstate the adjudication process so that the City can resume administering this process and the Alexandria Police Department resources currently dedicated to adjudication can be reassigned to parking enforcement activities
- Add additional parking enforcement officers (Staff has already acted on a component of this action item. In the summer of 2015, five overhire positions were added. This recommendation would be to continue to fund those five positions in subsequent years.)
- Proposed capital cost: \$150,000
- Proposed annual operating cost: \$500,000
- Potential revenue: \$600,000 (from enforcement activities)

Employee Parking and Transit Programs

- Provide more off-street parking options for City employees on the City parking waitlist by increasing the number of monthly garage spaces in City garages or applying the City's garage subsidy to private garages.
- Facilitate coordination with private garage owners for garage spaces and promote transit programs for private employers.
- Proposed annual operating cost: \$40,000

Transit Service

- In coordination with DASH, add morning trolley hours and/or reduce headways and optimize DASH routes operating in Old Town. Study the concept of a fare free transit zone in Old Town.
- Proposed annual operating cost: \$200,000

The draft implementation timeline also includes mid-term and long-term items; however, implementing these items may not be feasible with current staff resources. Staff will evaluate when to bring these items forward depending on available resources at that time. I have asked T&ES staff to develop a proposal for FY 2017 budget consideration an estimate of additional staff resources necessary to accelerate the implementation timetable for this set of Old Town parking issues, as well as parking issues Citywide. It should also be noted that some mid to long term items, such as changing meter hours, adjusting district boundaries, changing time limits for residential districts, and creating a staff initiated process for changing residential permit parking districts would require a public hearing before the Traffic and Parking Board and City Council approval.

FISCAL IMPACT: The fiscal impact of implementing the proposed implementation timeline varies by action item. All proposed costs for short-term action items would need to be refined and considered through the FY 2017 budget process.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: 2015 OTAPS Work Group Final Report

Attachment 2: Background Data

Attachment 3: 2015 OTAPS Work Group Recommendations Chart

Attachment 4: Draft Parking Management Work Plan

Attachment 5: Presentation

Attachment 6: Letter from Alexandria Transportation Commission

STAFF:

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