



Legislation Text

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File #: 14-4751, Version: 1

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** JANUARY 20, 2016

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of Receipt of the Parking Management Work Plan Related to the Recommendations of the Old Town Area Parking Study Work Group.

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**ISSUE:** Receipt of the parking management work plan related to the recommendations of the Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS) Work Group.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council receive the associated parking management work plan (Attachment 1) related to the OTAPS Work Group.

**BACKGROUND:** At the December 8, 2015 City Council meeting, the Council received the final report and recommendations of the OTAPS Work Group (the "Work Group") (Attachment 2). The Council also discussed the proposed work plan for implementing the recommendations and potential revisions to the timing of specific items. A motion was made to continue discussion about the work plan at Council's second January Legislative meeting in order to give Councilmembers additional time to consider the order and timing of the specific recommendations.

**DISCUSSION:** During their meetings, the Work Group discussed many different tools and strategies to address parking management in Old Town. The 2015 OTAPS Work Group Recommendations chart summarizes the Work Group's recommendations for several tools proposed to be implemented (Attachment 2). Since many of these tools support each other, the recommended tools are intended to be implemented together as a comprehensive package of strategies. However, it is not necessary that all tools be implemented at the same time.

The proposed work plan (Attachment 1) remains similar to what was presented in December, with the exception of the four specific items discussed further below. These changes made were based on comments during the Council meeting and input from the Work Group before and after the Council meeting.

#### Meters ending at 7 p.m. west of Alfred Street

Prior to its December 8 meeting, the Council received comments from several of the Work Group members requesting the recommendation to end meter times west of Alfred Street at

7 p.m. be moved up in the work plan as a short-term item. Given the discussion at the Council meeting, this request has been reflected in the revised work plan, but remains subject to budget considerations.

As discussed at Work Group meetings and at the Council meeting, staff has some reservations about this particular recommendation and the potential impacts due to lack of parking turnover. Best parking management practices typically recommend maintaining one to two available spaces on each block to support the adjacent businesses and ensure there will be parking available for all users at different times of the day. Spaces near desirable locations such as restaurants, retail shops, and the King Street Metro station are already more likely to be occupied. As shown in the parking utilization maps (Attachment 3), there are several blocks west of Alfred Street that were 80% or more occupied when the parking data was collected last year. By stopping the meters at 7 p.m., a single parker can legally occupy a spot from 4 p.m. until 8 a.m. the following day, using the space for the entire evening.

In addition, in July 2015, the meters in this location were changed to allow a maximum of three hours of parking versus two hours. This was intended to address comments that along the King Street corridor, west of Alfred Street, there are fewer off-street parking facilities and an additional hour would accommodate patrons of businesses in this area. Staff planned to study whether this change had improved occupancy of these lesser used spaces in the evenings while still encouraging turnover in the more occupied locations and lessening spillover onto the residential blocks. If this recommendation is implemented in the coming fiscal year, this analysis will not be done.

It should be noted that in Fiscal Year 2015, the meters west of Alfred Street (excluding those in Carlyle) generated approximately \$109,000 in meter revenue between 7-9 p.m. Additional revenue from enforcement was also collected, although the specific dollar amount is not available given the reporting constraints of the parking meter equipment.

If the recommendation to end meters west of Alfred Street at 7 p.m. is supported by the Council as a short term item, whether or not the change would be implemented would be considered during the upcoming budget process. If approved in the upcoming City budget for FY 2017, the Traffic and Parking Board and City Council could review the required change to the City Code in summer/fall 2016 and signage with the new hours could be installed shortly thereafter.

#### Residential Pango/Pay by Phone

The language in the work plan in Attachment 1 has been revised to emphasize the public support component of this recommendation. If directed by the Council, specific details for a pilot program will be developed in the coming months, and will include a resident initiated program that consists of a letter of support or using a petition process similar to the existing residential permit parking program to ensure the impacted residents are supportive of using this tool on their block.

Ideally, the pilot program would be implemented for up to a year to allow for occupancy data to be collected before and during the program. The program would be designed to target blocks that have already been documented as over 85% occupied and are adjacent to existing metered blocks. If this tool is an effective option for parking management, a permanent change can be made to the City Code to allow this as an option

residents can choose in the residential permit parking districts if criteria for the block is met. Since the first step is determining whether this is an effective tool, staff recommends implementing the pilot program as a short term item for the work plan and can begin reaching out to interested residents who would like to implement this feature on their block.

#### Staff initiated process for Amending Residential Parking Districts

The previous version of the work plan inadvertently included a recommendation to review creating a staff-initiated process for making changes to residential parking permit districts. This tool was discussed during the Work Group meetings, but was not supported by the majority of the Work Group. The proposed work plan is intended to be a reflection of the OTAPS Work Group recommendations that were supported by the majority of the members. To be consistent with the other Work Group recommendations, staff removed this new tool from the work plan of OTAPS recommendations.

However, this particular tool was also discussed by the Transportation Commission who took the opposite position of the Work Group. At their meetings in September and December (following the December 8 Council meeting), the Commission discussed the value of creating a process whereby staff could initiate changes to on-street parking restrictions comprehensively for a larger area, rather than the current block face only process that must be initiated by residents. The Commission discussed that this should be explored as an additional option to the process, and emphasized this should not replace the existing resident initiated process. The Commission noted the likely citizen concerns about a staff-initiated option but felt the public comment process before the Traffic and Parking Board and in some cases the City Council were sufficient checks to ensure public input for any changes staff proposed. The Transportation Commission strongly supports including this tool in the work plan and recommends the Council include it in the work plan (Attachment 4).

Staff recognizes the benefits of a staff-initiated process for determining comprehensive on-street parking restrictions. It is also recognized that this change will very likely be met with reservations and objections from residents who would prefer to maintain control of changes to parking restrictions on their streets. Additionally, this change to the Code would be effective City-wide rather than just within the study area. Therefore, if Council asks staff to explore this recommendation further, it may be more appropriate as a citywide parking initiative rather than part of the work plan created to implement the recommendations of the OTAPS Work Group.

#### Meters to 3 hours east of Alfred Street

Similar to the meter request discussed above, some Work Group members requested that the change to the maximum parking time for meters east of Alfred Street also be moved up in the work plan. Staff has kept this as a long term recommendation, but moved it up in the work plan to be considered to start in FY 2018. Although there is just a small budget impact associated with this recommendation, extending the time could impact overall parking space turnover in the area. Since the data collected in 2014 showed these meters had actually increased in occupancy since 2009, staff recommends further study of the impacts on the surrounding residential streets prior to approving a change to the parking time limit.

#### Next Steps

With the exception of the information and marketing recommendation, implementing the specific items in this work plan will require additional consideration by Council during the budget process or with a modification to City Code. Upon acceptance of this work plan, staff will begin preparing the necessary budget information for the five short term recommendations with budget impacts (wayfinding, enforcement, employee parking, transit service, and ending the meters at 7 p.m. west of Alfred Street). Staff can also start developing the pilot program for residential pay by phone.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** As noted in the December docket memo, 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, and in that process, compete with other City resource needs.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: Draft Parking Management Work Plan (Revised December 14, 2015)  
Attachment 2: 2015 Docket Memo from December 8 Council Meeting (with attachments)  
Attachment 3: Parking Utilization Maps (Weekday, Friday, and Saturday evening)  
Attachment 4: January 5, 2016 Letter from Alexandria Transportation Commission  
Attachment 5: Presentation

**STAFF:**

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