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**TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING COMMISSION**  
**Minutes – March 11, 2020**  
**Council Chambers – Village Hall**  
**801 Burlington Avenue, Downers Grove**

Commissioner Carter called the March 11, 2020 meeting of the Transportation and Parking Commission to order at 7:01 P.M. and led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Commissioners Carter, Wilkinson, Carlson, Novak

**Absent:** Commissioners Wrobel, Jenkins, Schiller

**Staff:** Public Works Director Andy Sikich, Public Works Traffic Engineer Will Lorton, Community Development Planning Manager Jason Zawila, Community Development Planner Gabriella Baldassari, Officer Chris Fisher

**Visitor Roster:** Jack Marengo, Erin Venezia

A quorum was established.

Commissioner Carter reviewed the procedures to be followed for the meeting, explaining that the Commission will forward a recommendation to the Village Council for approval.

**APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 20, 2019 MINUTES**

**COMMISSIONER WILKINSON MOVED TO ACCEPT MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER NOVAK SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE 4:0.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

No public comment on non-agenda items.

Commissioner Carter proceeded to files on the agenda.

**File #1-20 Downtown Parking Study**

Village Planning Manager Jason Zawila summarized the slide presentation with a brief overview of the 2019 study and additional analysis of the downtown parking system. The study engaged stakeholders through a survey of approximately 1600 respondents comprised of downtown business owners, employees, commuters, and visitors. Approximately half of the respondents believe there is not enough commuter parking. An outside consulting company was utilized in 2019 to analyze and make recommendations on the current downtown parking system. The consulting company findings included the following information: 25% of parking spaces were available during peak demand times from 12pm – 1pm; amount of available spaces increased to 46% from 4pm – 6pm; on-street occupancy parking increased since 2011 by approximately 5%; off-street parking increased by 6.5%; there is a parking surplus for residents at Main and Maple

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apartments; there is a minor parking deficit for resident parking at Burlington Station and Marquis on Maple. Survey qualitative data indicated many respondents expressed dissatisfaction and frustration with the current parking system. The analysis shows that even during peak demand, there are reasonable, accessible spaces available to most users of the system. The library parking lot in November on an average Saturday is fully occupied, while the very nearby lot D parking lot by Burlington station had very few cars parked in it. This shows that clearly plenty of spaces are available at another peak time, but it is more desirable for customers of the library and the businesses close by to utilize the library parking lot. The question is, if it is known that lot D is available, which drivers will utilize that parking lot if it is properly signed?

Key recommendations identified: do not pursue additional structured parking; formalize a recommended level of service concept; consider operational, technological, and policy improvements to the existing system; promote the walkability of the downtown area. More detailed recommendations were provided by the reports and will be discussed at the May meeting as to which ones are able to be implemented this year, and to give staff an analysis of which ones are most appropriate to take care of upfront because all of the recommendations are not able to be implemented in one year.

There are two key improvements to be made to the existing system which are related to the external driver in the downtown: making the parking system less complicated to understand and ensuring the system is better communicated. Signage can help with this. A third outcome staff would like to see is that time is made more efficient through areas of administrative support, enforcement, and system management of the parking system.

Current parking regulations include 23 sets of regulations related to parking in the downtown, covering 11 geographic areas. The system is complicated. Currently there are 355 designated commuter permit spaces in lots B, D and F with free parking after 11am. Parking lots are approximately 75% occupied. Important to note that the free unoccupied spaces are for shopping and accessibility. The majority of the commuter spaces are occupied before and during peak times. Many trains go through downtown during peak hours: 7 express trains, 6 slow trains, the 8:28am express time is important. There are 208 downtown business permit spaces for employees in two designated areas that are allowed M-F. DB passes are also allowed in lots traditionally used for commuter passes beginning at 8:30am, after the last express train leaves the station. Downtown passes for first quarter (Jan., Feb., Mar.) had 349 downtown business permits issued. Downtown hourly spaces have: 4 different timed free spaces for 2, 3, and 4 hour shoppers; and 15 minute drop off/pick up spaces at the end of most blocks downtown. Residential permits: overnight residential lot R in parking deck; lot L overnight pass allowed 5 nights per month by residents with approximately 8 requests a month for that permit; call in, online, overnight option available throughout the entire Village typically used for emergencies and construction, and are limited to 12 nights within a 12 month period. Paid options downtown: one day pass offered for users in commuter lots after 8:30am and must be physical purchased at Village Hall; park X with 16 designated spaces at Village Hall parking lot and are usually 100% occupancy M-F; meters with 38 spaces in lot F identified at 100% occupancy M-F; parking passport app with 3 out of 4 visitors who use parking spaces utilizing passport. The parking deck has various spaces utilized in different ways: 505 daily fee spaces traditionally used by commuters which are near 100% M-F; DB parking on level 2; lot R with 4 hour shopping spaces; designated spaces for reverse commuters on level 2; all spaces are free after 11am.

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Reports recommend expanding or relocating certain permits. Before expanding or relocating, staff must understand what we have now and where opportunities are, because something will be misplaced for another user. Staff conducted a survey of DB eligible lots to identify where occupancies are right now for times of 8:30am, 9:30am, and 10:30am: At 8:30am there are 138 spaces available and the number decreases as the day progresses. At 8:30am open spaces are in the parking deck, Forest lot north, and various spaces throughout the system. At 10:30am there are certain areas where the number decreases, and some where the number stays the same. Level 2 in the garage with DB passes and a couple of reverse commuter spaces have a 49 space decrease closer to lunch. Forest lot north shows a lot of potential opportunity at 8:30am, but gets closer to 100% occupancy closer to lunch hour. 349 downtown business permits: 35% being used at 8:30am; 50% being used by 10:30am. Shows that half of downtown business passes are being used in the morning. Does not account for multiple employees working for downtown businesses that are on different shifts.

Enforcement of regulations involves: license plate reader on police vehicles; daily pay machine reports; officers physically check parking. In 2019 there were nearly 2400 parking citations issued downtown in off street parking lots; 82% in the garage; 18% in downtown lots. Parking garage has almost 70% failure to pay daily fees, overage time parking where cars are in spaces longer than the allotted time on the second floor, and 13% that have no permits on DB level or residential spots on first floor. Downtown parking lots have 75% not showing permits, 20% overage for vehicles in spot longer than allotted time, and occasional car parked overnight without prior consent.

Communication efforts begin with signage in the downtown and the report indicates that currently sign clutter is an issue. Village website and handouts have good information but finding it is difficult for residents and visitors to obtain and understand.

Planned construction projects: Forest lot north changes which are expected to happen summer 2020 will be a temporary disruption to service, but will be a vastly improved parking lot with a net gain of 3 spaces. Ongoing discussions with Village facility will change how parking is oriented. It is not known yet how it will change, but it is a large upcoming change to be aware of that will impact future recommendations.

### 5 Key Observations from further analysis:

- 1) Varying regulations over the years have led to a complicated parking system that is difficult to communicate and inefficient to manage. Looking to make changes to that.
- 2) Hourly parking is very inconsistent leading to user confusion, underutilization, and increased enforcement. Need to make the information easier to communicate.
- 3) Forest lot north does not have clear signage, and has too much confusing signage creating a frustrating experience. Must work on signage.
- 4) Believes there is an opportunity to maximize open spaces during the AM peak in level 2 of the parking garage, and potentially Main Street lots before 11am. Reviewing how to do that now and will come back to commission with proposed plan.
- 5) Still using outdated meters which takes up a lot of physical time from staff and looking at a better way to do that.

Upcoming planned projects will cause short term disruption for long term benefit which are important to keep in mind in regards to the study recommendations. Desired outcomes from the Village with operational improvements: less complicated, easier to understand, better

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communicated to the public, more efficient use of staff time. Will come back in May with initial long term action items and recommendations to addition of regulation changes. There is a lot to do and staff appreciates any input you may have. April's meeting will be dedicated to the District 99 traffic study, which is why this will not be addressed again until May.

### **COMMISSIONER CARTER OPENED DISCUSSION AMONGST THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner stated that the library had come in within the past year requesting 2 spaces on the street; a 15 minute, and a handicap space, which were given to them. Asked if this study shows if that many handicap spaces are needed in the library parking lot, because if one handicap space is removed from the lot due to a new one being on the street, then there is room for 2 regular spaces in the lot in a more desirable area in that lot.

Mr. Zawila stated that the regulations have changed for accessible spaces, where there can be a shared stall, which could potentially open up more spaces. That is something that can be considered.

Commissioner Wilkinson stated that it would be good to have more spaces in the desired area. Believes the library lot currently has 10-12 handicap spaces taking up a lot of potential space. Commissioner Wilkinson asked if there is data on street violations. Mr. Zawila stated they do not have that data at this time, but can go back and pull that information. Commissioner stated it would be appropriate to incorporate that information because going back to the library on a Saturday, believes that lot is in such demand because the employees are parked on the street. States that the D lot will not get filled on a Saturday because employees are street parking right in front of places of business with no restrictions all day since the 2 hour signs say M-F. Many small business are open 6-7 days, but on Saturdays their customers cannot park in front of the businesses. Commissioner would like to see something done to help the south side of tracks by having the commuters who live on the north side of the tracks park on the north side by finding space for them somewhere. This will cut down on cross traffic back and forth on the train tracks, and will take pressure off of the commuter lots on the south side so that some of the existing parking can be redistributed between commuters and downtown business employees. Restaurant turnover and closings will affect parking. Restaurants are mainly open in the evenings, so street parking at 4pm makes them golden the rest of the night because there is no restriction. Employees working until 1 or 2 in the morning are still good until 2am. It does not help to have employees taking up space close to the restaurants all night. There are dynamics of daytime business activity with customers in and out, as well as at night.

Commissioner Novak Very impressed with presentation and sees that there are clearly changes that need to be made. Asked Officer Fisher what the number of community services officers that focus on daily parking is. Officer Fisher states that there is one officer dedicated to the downtown business district M-F. Asked what daily enforcement activities are from a citation perspective. Officer Fisher stated that based on his educated guess, the daily enforcement is mostly spent on the hourly time zones and also in the parking garage enforcing the daily fees. There is a little bit of time in all of the other service lots, but the time in the parking lots is minimal as the data shows. Asked if there is any focus on street parking. Office Fisher replied that they did not focus on it for this study as they were focusing on enforcement data on surface lots. Asked if street parking enforcement is performed during normal duties. Officer Fisher replied yes in the surface lots, but the majority of time is spent on the streets because there are a very small amount of time zone spaces in the surface lots, and a much higher amount of time

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zone spaces on the streets. Asked if technology can help with solutions to issues. Officer Fisher said the Village is in the process of purchasing a new LPR system for a new parking vehicle, and possibly another squad car, and more technology would be welcome. Current system for license plate recognition is 11 years old.

Commissioner Carlson inquired about programmable message boards for cars searching for parking. Mr. Zawila stated there are several options being considered which will be presented in May. Commissioner believes digital messaging will eliminate a lot of unnecessary clutter in the lots. Knows there is a plate reader technology that other states use where the parking structure sends alerts to the patrol unit regarding vehicles approaching time limits. Believes signage outside of parking structure stating number of open spaces will be helpful.

Commissioner Carter states that there is parking at Belmont station that is underutilized. Questioning if Village can reach out to Metra to ask if some express trains can stop at the Belmont station, instead of only stopping at Main Street where everyone is fighting for spaces. Other municipalities such as Hinsdale and Westmont are going through the same struggle of having enough parking spaces. Believes that both Fairview and Belmont stations are underutilized. Mr. Zawila stated that it is on list of recommendations and is complicated to change schedules, but is being considered. Commissioner Carter states that future Village Hall building plans need to consider parking implications.

## **COMMISSIONER CARTER OPENED UP THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Jack Marengo, President of Acadia on the Green Building 1 Condo Association, home to 41 downtown families, with 64 in building parking spaces. Also a member of the Downtown Downers Grove Condo President's Network. Present tonight to voice his building's support of the recommendations of the 2019 Walker Consultants parking survey. They believe implementation of the residential parking recommendations can help alleviate the frustrations the downtown residents currently feel about downtown overnight parking. The residential parking recommendations include, but are not limited to: increasing the overnight street parking permits from the current number of 12 per owner; increasing the number of overnight lot R permits; allowing downtown residents to use the roof level of the parking garage during weekdays from 6pm to 6am. Thank you.

### **COMMISSIONER CARTER CLOSED THE PUBLIC COMMENT AND OPENED DISCUSSION AMONGST THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Carlson inquired if there is any incentive for commuters to carpool. Mr. Zawila stated there is not currently one, it is based off of when residents apply for the waiting list.

Mr. Lorton stated that Lot H at Belmont is permit only and believes it is oversold by about 130%. Typically about 120% was what it was oversold in the past, it has gradually been increased, and they are still seeing vacancies. It is on the table as an item as part of another group addressing that in the future.

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**ADJOURN**

**MR. CARTER MOVED TO ADJOURN, SECONDED BY MR. NOVAK.  
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE 4:0.**

Commissioner Carter adjourned the meeting at 7:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Andrea Banke  
Recording Secretary