



TOWN OF CONCORD

Department of Planning and Land Management

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MEMORANDUM

To: Chris Whelan, Town Manager

From: Parking Management Team - Marcia Rasmussen, Rich Reine, Tony Logalbo, Bill Renault, Kevin Monahan, Pat Robertson

Re: **Overview of the Parking Management Plan – preliminary recommendations**

Date: June 19, 2014

The Parking Management Team is comprised of Town staff from Planning, Public Works, Police and Finance. In 2012 and 2013, we worked with Parking Consultant Nelson-Nygaard to comprehensively consider parking management in Concord – focusing on the commercial businesses and recreational facilities located in Concord Center and West Concord.

Nelson-Nygaard's report, dated April 2013, observed that the parking issues expressed by the community are rarely about parking itself, but are tied to other factors at work in Concord – economic development, livability, vitality, friendliness and attractiveness. The recommendations developed by Nelson-Nygaard were with the following parking principals in mind:

- Provide convenient parking for **customers/clients**
- Establish clear Town and private **employee parking** areas
- Accommodate **commuter parking** appropriately
- Protect **residential neighborhoods** from spillover.

Town staff has gone further in addressing these recommendations, working with the premise that the implementation of recommendations be funded by and through the Parking Management strategies selected. The purpose of bringing these preliminary recommendations to the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen is to solicit questions and concerns so the Parking Management Team can incorporate the answers into the implementation plan.

Over the past year, Town staff has reviewed the recommendations contained in the Nelson-Nygaard report and begun to prepare an implementation program, preliminarily discussed implementation steps with the Planning Board (2014 Annual Town Meeting adopted a modest revision to the Zoning Bylaw to require bicycle parking facilities), attended the MAPC-sponsored Parking Management forum in April 2014, and reviewed parking management technologies by meeting with vendors to discuss the advantages of various technologies. The following is an overview of our recommendations:

1. **Change Hours of Operation for collecting parking fees from 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Monitor the situation and consider extending hours of operation as needed to address parking demand.**
2. **Change length of time for parking on street – increase from 1 hour to 4 hours**
3. **Change the fee for parking – increase the basic fee of 0.50/hour to \$1.00 per hour as an initial step for on-street parking and in municipal parking lots, with flexibility for future rate**

changes based on parking demand/timing models. Consider \$4.00/day for commuter parking (this is the current rate for the MBTA commuter lot in West Concord).

4. Extend the location of on-street pay for parking using a combination of meters, kiosk type parking stations and mobile phone applications.
5. Extend pay for parking to municipal parking lots
6. Extend pay for commuter parking near Thoreau St./Concord Center Depot through memorandum of agreements with private property owners and with the MBTA
7. Improve signage to municipal parking lots using standard blue 'P' for parking sign and prepare a map showing where parking is located that can be distributed through businesses, visitor centers and on-line.
8. Adopt new technology for parking management – on-street meters upgraded to accept credit cards (short-term); kiosk-type parking stations in municipal parking lots and where the on-street parking fees have been extended; and mobile phone applications that allow drivers to pay for parking using license plate number to confirm compliance.
9. Update Parking Regulations
10. Update Zoning for parking requirements and relief from parking requirements
11. Reduce impact to neighborhoods in proximity to the train stations by installing signs limiting on-street parking to 4 hours.
12. Consider improvements to on-street parking and other parking facilities for the large recreational facilities (Emerson and Rideout Playgrounds).
13. Review neighborhood-oriented resident permit parking program and establish criteria for implementation
14. Consider designating sites for bus parking of tour buses and school buses and explore fee-based parking for buses

Next Steps toward Implementation:

Spring 2014 – Review parking management technology options by interviewing various providers; select most advantageous technology for on-street parking and for commuter parking; begin outreach to owners of private commuter parking spaces.

Summer 2014 - Begin drafting agreements with owners of commuter parking spaces; implement changes in pricing; implement changes in commuter parking lots where agreements have been reached by ordering and installing equipment; replace existing parking directional signs with standard blue 'P' parking signs; reach out to the MBTA to begin discussion of changes to the West Concord commuter lot payment system and formalizing the commuter parking on other land owned by the MBTA on Cottage Lane; review draft revisions to parking regulations.

Fall 2014 – Adopt revised parking regulations; change signs in commercial centers to reflect changes in regulations; begin installing signs in residential areas to address potential commuter spillover; Planning Board creates parking task force to examine additional revisions to the Zoning Bylaw regarding parking requirements and shared parking.

Spring/Summer 2015 – Consider criteria for neighborhood-oriented resident parking program; purchase and install new meters or other parking technology to replace on-street meters; purchase and install kiosk-type parking stations in municipal lots; continue outreach to private property owners to identify strategies for managing parking.

Fall 2015 – Implement parking lot improvements as identified.

Additional Information/Details

The following provides expanded information about the staff recommendations.

1. Change Hours of Operation for collecting fees from 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

All existing metered spaces should be amended to extend the time limit to allow four-hour parking stays. Most stores don't open until 10:00 a.m.; a later starting time would be an incentive for truck/van drivers to make early deliveries potentially reducing traffic congestion. Monitor the parking situation and consider extending hours of operation as needed to address parking demand.

2. Change length of time for parking on street – increase from 1 hour to 4 hours

Customers who want to shop and dine generally need more than an hour. Consistency in the length of time for parking will simplify information for the customer. The Town can consider increasing the parking fee after 2 hours to promote turnover of spaces. Retaining the 12-minute free button or application will also promote turnover of parking spaces.

3. Increase the fee for parking – change the basic fee of 0.50/hour to \$1.00 per hour as an initial step for on-street parking and in municipal parking lots, with flexibility for future rate changes based on parking demand/timing models. Consider \$4.00/day for commuter parking (the current rate for MBTA commuter lot in West Concord).

In order to pay for improvements, extensions and upgrades for Parking Management, a fee increase is recommended; a capital improvement item may also be necessary to implement the program sooner to reduce the potential for spillover parking problems. Monitor the impact of this rate change and evaluate parking demand patterns that may result from the change

4. Extend the location of on-street pay for parking

Consider extending other parking management technology (kiosk) for on-street parking spaces in the following locations:

- a. Main Street from Sudbury Road intersection to Belknap Street
- b. Thoreau Street from Main Street to Belknap Street
- c. Monument Square

5. Extend pay for parking to municipal parking lots

Municipal Parking Lots in Concord Center and West Concord are currently free; while some spaces should remain free or low-cost to be available for people who work in town, other spaces should contribute to the parking management program. A kiosk and/or mobile phone application would be the least intrusive method for accomplishing this.

6. Extend pay for commuter parking near Thoreau St./Concord Center Depot through memorandum of agreements with private property owners and with the MBTA

Both the Thoreau Depot and West Concord areas have commuter rail stations that are easily walkable to and from commercial activity centers, yet commuter parking has been a source of conflicting regulations and community concern. The Town could consider:

- a) Taking a pro-active role in managing and accommodating commuter parking, which requires working with private property owners and the MBTA;
- b) Expanding the existing resident commuter parking permit program to the Thoreau Depot area (e.g., Crosby's Market location with shared revenues with Crosby's and the Town;

- c) work with MBTA to require permits or pay-and-display on Cottage Lane and add signage to indicate these spaces as for commuter parking Monday through Friday, 6 am to 6 pm;
- d) work with owner to require permits on Love Lane lot; and
- e) Investigate additional shared parking opportunities.

7. Improve signage to municipal parking lots using standard blue 'P' for parking sign and prepare a parking location map

Signage provides clear identification of parking facilities and helps visitors and residents understand where it is acceptable to park; using the international symbol for parking will help everyone find the parking they need. Preparing a way-finding map or parking location map that is available on-line and at businesses and visitor centers will help those visiting Concord to find suitable parking.

8. Adopt new technology for parking management – on-street meters upgraded to accept credit cards (potentially a short-term solution); kiosk-type parking stations in municipal parking lots and where the on-street parking fees have been extended; and mobile phone applications that allow drivers to pay for parking using license plate number to confirm compliance.

Concord's current parking technology is a standard approach that is labor intensive. The existing meters can be reprogrammed to implement changes in hours, time limits and price (but increasing the price may require more frequent collection) and the Police Dept. has indicated that the meters have been breaking more frequently (due to the extreme cold this past winter) and there are no existing reserves. The existing fee collection box located in the West Concord commuter lot is also very labor intensive because commuters stuff four folded single dollar bills into each slot – Town staff must unfold each dollar bill collected (7,000-8,000 each month) before preparing the funds for deposit.

Recommendations include:

- a. Reprogram the existing McKay meters to implement the change in hours, time limits and price;
- b. Upgrade existing meters or implement pay-stations and mobile application for on-street parking spaces;
- c. Implement pay-stations in parking lots and a mobile phone application for alternative payments;
- d. Purchase hand-held enforcement devices that communicate with upgraded meters and pay stations, as needed.

9. Update Parking Regulations

Adopt a 'Parking Restriction' during snow emergencies as recommended by Concord Public Works. Update and adopt new parking regulations as recommended by the Parking Management Group.

10. Update Zoning for parking requirements and relief from parking requirements

The Planning Board has expressed an interest in creating a Parking Task Force to begin discussions with business owners and commercial property owners about potential changes and implementation of the recommendations found in the Parking Management Study, which include:

- o Evaluate changing the minimum parking requirements to maximum requirements for some uses.
- o Allow in-lieu fees to provide funds that can help support the overall parking system when considering waivers from parking requirements.
- o Consider removing the parking requirements for change of uses when under 20,000 sq. ft. of a building.

- Broaden the provision for shared parking - work with private property owners to promote shared parking facilities that create more efficient and easily accessed parking;
- Update the curb-cut provisions for commercial uses and establish design standards for curb-cuts across sidewalks (to mirror the CPW regulations).

11. Reduce impact to neighborhoods by installing signs limiting on-street parking to 4 hours.

Once parking fees are instituted at the existing commuter parking facilities, spillover parking onto residential neighborhood streets is likely to become a problem. Installing signs limiting parking to four hours would address problems with commuters and workers.

12. Consider improvements to on-street parking and other parking facilities for the large recreational facilities (Emerson and Rideout Playgrounds).

There are opportunities to improve and expand upon the parking opportunities around both Emerson and Rideout Playgrounds as well as to enhance pedestrian access and safety that should be considered for design and implementation as part of any improvement strategy for these parks.

13. Review neighborhood-oriented “resident permit” parking program and establish criteria for implementation.

The Town has a “resident permit” program for limited areas around Town to address summer activities related to Walden Pond and White Pond; however, as additional requests are received, the Town should establish criteria for considering these requests.

14. Consider designating sites for bus parking of tour buses and school buses and explore fee-based parking for buses.

There is existing parking for tour buses at the Minute Man National Historical Park facilities at the Buttrick Mansion parking lot and the Monument Street parking lot near the North Bridge; otherwise tour buses park ad hoc around Concord. Town staff is working to identify designated sites for bus parking.