

Memorandum

Date: April 21, 2015
To: Planning & Economic Development Committee
From: Ken Putnam, PE, Transportation Department Director
VIA: Gary Jackson, City Manager
Re: Parking Studies

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on various parking issues and to seek policy direction to address those issues.

The city undertook a major parking study with the help of a consultant for the Central Business District in downtown Asheville and that document was completed in 2008. It was then updated in 2010 and included a modeling tool known as PARK+. The parking occupancy rates were updated in 2013 and they are scheduled to be updated in 2015 (staff is striving to update this information on a two-year cycle timeframe). In addition to the Central Business District, the base layer for two other areas was created in the 2010 study. Specifically, the areas included the River Arts District and Biltmore Village. The modeling tool enables staff to analyze various parking scenarios in these areas (with the help of our consultant) in a short and cost effective timeframe. For example, if we received a request to analyze a parking need in the Grove Arcade area, we could typically accomplish that task in about 45 days.

Currently, staff is working on a parking study with the help of a consultant for the Haywood Road Corridor in West Asheville and it should be completed by June 2015. Since this corridor is linear, staff has determined that the modeling tool would not be beneficial and is not being created. We do anticipate receiving a menu of recommended action steps based on heavy community involvement that can guide staff in addressing current and future parking issues throughout the corridor.

Staff is now getting numerous requests regarding parking-related issues. Examples include the need for additional parking garages in the downtown Central Business District (the South Slope and the Grove Arcade area), the River Arts District, and Biltmore Village, the need to meter on-street parking in Biltmore Village and the River Arts District (as a part of the RAD LOFTS project), and the possibility of variable pricing for on-street metered parking. These requests are coming from citizens, business owners, developers, and council members.

Although the Parking Enterprise Fund is performing well even with three years into the debt service at the Biltmore Avenue Parking Garage, it will not be able to support all of the requests that we are receiving and will receive in the future. At the end of FY 2013-14, the Parking Fund balance totaled \$580,000 (not including the fund balance target of 8% of the operating budget).

Staff would like policy direction on how to prioritize these requests, especially the ones from developers, council members, and parking study recommendations. Unless

otherwise directed, staff will move forward with updating the parking occupancy data in the central business district on a two-year cycle beginning in the fall of 2015.

Please let me know if additional information is needed.

KJP/