

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
REPORT FOR THE VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 3, 2012 AGENDA

SUBJECT:	TYPE:	SUBMITTED BY:
Downtown Parking Study	Resolution Ordinance ✓ Motion Discussion Only	Nan Newlon, P.E. Director of Public Works

SYNOPSIS

A motion is requested to accept the Downtown Parking Study, prepared by Rich and Associates, Inc. of Southfield, Michigan in conjunction with Downtown Management Corporation and Village staff.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The goals for 2011-2018 identified *Exceptional Municipal Services, Top Quality Infrastructure, and Strong, Diverse Local Economy*.

FISCAL IMPACT

NA

UPDATE & RECOMMENDATION

This item was discussed at the December 13, 2011 Village Council meeting. Staff recommends that the Village Council accept the Downtown Parking Study report on the January 3, 2012 Consent Agenda.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this project is to ensure that the Village, in cooperation and coordination with the Downtown Downers Grove Management Corporation (DMC), is using best practices to plan and manage available parking in a manner that best serves downtown Downers Grove. To assist with this project the Village contracted with Rich and Associates of Southfield, MI, a firm that specializes in municipal parking operations and has experience with comparable communities in the region. A steering committee was formed that included members of the DMC. The project included an extensive amount of data collection and stakeholder input to understand current conditions and parking demands as well as projected future parking demands. The study includes the following Key Findings:

Key Findings***Capacity***

- Daytime public/private parking ratio is less than optimal
 - Supply is 45% under public control (available to anyone regardless of destination)
 - 55% under private control, which means that it is intended only for customers or staff of a private entity
 - Optimal mix would be 50% of each
- Parking system does not have enough capacity to support future development

Conditions at Peak Usage (Mid-day weekday)

- Public parking usage is more than 85% at peak usage, which contributes to perception that parking is difficult
- During peak usage, parking north of the railroad tracks is 90% occupied, which signifies that there is a shortage
- At peak usage, private parking is only 55% occupied
- Parking deck is well-used by commuters (daily fee) and is at 90% occupancy during peak times

Non-Commuter Parking

- The existing mix of 2, 3 and 4 hour parking times is good
- Strategically placed short-term (15 min.) spaces would facilitate short trips
- Library patrons feel parking near library is inadequate
- More handicap accessible parking is needed in surface lots to meet ADA regulations

Commuter Parking

- Rates charged for commuter parking are controlled by agreements with BNSF and Metra
- Five of the commuter parking lots are owned by BNSF and leased to the Village
- Village leases 250 spaces in deck to Metra
- The Village currently provides 86 more commuter spaces than required by the Metra agreements
- Metra provides grants to help fund parking improvements
- Commuters that park the furthest from the train station (for example, in the deck) pay more than commuters that park in better proximity
- Commuter permit rates are lower than some neighboring communities
- There is a demand for overnight and reverse-commute parking
- 6% parking violation rate on weekdays (target 5%); 10% parking violation rate on weekends

Recommendations

The Parking Study recommendations include those made by the consultant as well as recommendations made by staff and Downtown Management Corporation. Implementation of a majority of the recommendations will require changes to regulations or Village policy and will be presented in more detail to the Transportation and Parking Commission and Village Council prior to implementation. Recommendations that are not regulatory or require a change to Council policy are being addressed by staff, such as clarifying signage, varying the hours of enforcement and improving lighting and vegetation management in parking lots.

Mix and Locations of Parking

- Move commuter parking spaces out of Lots A and B to private lots and Village Hall lot
- Convert Lots A and B to shopper parking
- Change some library lot parking from 3 hours to 1 hour
- Create 15 minute spaces at ends of blocks next to appropriate business uses
- Change Level 5 of the deck to all daily fee
- Add loading zones in appropriate locations for deliveries – sign and stripe appropriately
- Allow non-permit holders to park in vacant permit spaces beginning at 11am

Fees and Permits

- Charge for overnight parking
- Review policy of free parking for handicap permitted commuter spaces
- Review parking rates for commuter permits
- Adjust parking rates on a regular basis.

Address Need for Additional Parking

- Investigate options to increase shared use parking north of the BNSF tracks
- Lease private parking for commuters or downtown employees
- Review zoning regulations with respect to parking for future downtown development

Enforcement

- Vary the hours of enforcement
- Implement an anti-shuffling ordinance
- Consider creation of a courtesy, first-ticket warning system

ATTACHMENTS

Meeting Minutes – TAP Commission

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
COUNCIL ACTION SUMMARY

INITIATED: Public Works **DATE:** January 3, 2012
(Name)

RECOMMENDATION FROM: _____ **FILE REF:** _____
(Board or Department)

NATURE OF ACTION:

STEPS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT ACTION:

- Ordinance
- Resolution
- Motion
- Other

Motion to accept the Downtown Parking Study, prepared by Rich and Associates, Inc.

SUMMARY OF ITEM:

Adoption of the attached motion shall accept the Downtown Parking Study prepared by Rich and Associates.

RECORD OF ACTION TAKEN:

TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING COMMISSION

OCTOBER 5, 2011

MEETING MINUTES

3. File # 08-11. Downtown Parking Study – Final Report.

Dir. Newlon introduced consultant **Mr. Dave Burr**, from Rich and Associates, to make the Draft Final presentation of the Downtown Parking Study. She also announced that the audio portion of the September 14, 2011 meeting along with the PowerPoint presentation of the study, were posted on the Village's web site for the public to follow along.

Mr. Dave Burr summarized the scope of work again for this project, as discussed at last month's presentation. A review of each of the 13 areas were reviewed, along with the findings and recommendations for each area. Addressing the finding that the village was actually providing 910 parking spaces in all of the commuter lots versus the Metra-required 825 spaces, **Mr. Burr** clarified that the surplus could be converted to shopper parking. Asked if it would make sense to use some of the outlying parking available for free employee parking, **Mr. Burr** responded that whether those spaces would be used for commuter parking or employee parking, was up to the village. **Mr. Burr**, in reviewing the handicapped/accessible parking requirements, added that, in addition to the village's shortage of handicap spaces for the commuter lots, there is a new federal guideline being proposed which would also require on-street handicap spaces. When the guidelines are adopted, **Mr. Burr** stated that a diagram from the government agency would detail how such parking would be laid out, whether diagonal or parallel.

Mr. Burr continued his presentation, discussing the findings and recommendations for timed parking, parking around the library, and possibly converting a couple of current spaces to 15-minute parking spaces around the library for drop-offs. A question came up if the street direction the library drop box was located on could be reversed, as it did not make sense currently, to free up parking spaces. **Mr. Burr** reported that it would be up to the village to determine where it wanted to locate those 15-minute parking spaces along various blocks. **Dir. Newlon**, however, raised the fact that signage becomes an issue when businesses change or move out. **Mr. Burr** stated that as best practices go, those short-term spaces would be located at the end of a block.

A question was raised that if another future residential development comes to the downtown area, would parking be required as part of the zoning, to which **Dir. Newlon** stated yes, and that the Planning Manager and staff will be reviewing the zoning code in 2012 as it relates to the parking requirements for downtown development.

Other recommendations mentioned by **Mr. Burr** addressed the Village's valet spaces, so that they have clearer parking signage, and also adjusting the Parking Deck rates. Commissioner comments included looking at an annual increase to the parking permit versus increasing it every few years and to consider offering a higher parking rate, similar to Naperville, since Downers Grove offered more non-stops trains to Chicago. The extra revenue could then be returned back into the village's parking program. **Mr. Schiller** agreed with the higher rate also, noting that Downers Grove's parking was in its downtown area, whereas, Naperville's spaces were not near its downtown. Additionally, he stated there was an existing demand in Downers Grove that was not offered in other communities. Other commissioners concurred.

Another commissioner suggestion raised was to offer lower parking rates at the Belmont station, thereby directing some of the non-Village residents out of the downtown parking spaces and moving them to the Belmont station, since it was noted that many non-village commuters did not patronize the village's downtown businesses anyway. **Dir. Newlon** stated the option could be considered in the Village's pricing strategy but there were aspects of the agreement with Metra and BNSF to not discriminate between residents and non-residents. **Chairman Stuebner** said it would be interesting to offer a pilot program on that point and see what the results would be. A dialog ensued. In response, **Dir. Newlon** pointed out that the parking operations group was working on promoting the additional parking located at the Fairview Ave Metra station to the occasional and mid-day users. She also believed it was an educational component.

Mr. Burr continued his discussion by stating that daily fee rates could be applied to handicap accessible permits, which currently are free. **Chairman Stuebner** believed that in specific areas for overnight parking there could be a restriction that vehicles leave by a certain time of day.

In closing, **Mr. Burr** reviewed the Implementation Schedule for the commissioners. First off, staff could have discussions with the private property owners to open up their spaces; speak to Metra about reducing the excess commuter parking spaces to shopper parking; re-assign spaces at Lot B; change the daily fee; add handicap accessibility spaces in lots; and charge a fee for the overnight parking. He reminded the commissioners that the aforementioned steps were low cost and would help the parking situation. Short-term recommendations included implementing the 15-minute spaces at the end of the blocks; changing the time limits in the library lot; implementing enforcement changes; conducting a parking lot condition audit; marketing the changes, obtaining a signage consultant; reviewing the loading zones and conducting an annual utilization count.

Discussion followed by **Dir. Newlon** that the village already over-sold the lots, but that a more comprehensive look at how the parking was being utilized, as suggested by the consultant, be done. **Mr. Burr** suggested that the review be done annually and to look at weekend or weekday parking to cover an entire day.

The long-range implementation schedule included, as cited by **Mr. Burr**, to add a new parking garage on the north side of the village since not much vacant land existed and any existing parking was already limited.

Regarding the suggestion of a parking garage on the north side of the tracks, **Chairman Stuebner** stated he did not know how the businesses were going to change there and if a parking garage were to be constructed, would it attract people going to the south side of the tracks? **Mr. Burr** explained that the proposed north parking garage was a matter of parking efficiency and if the village wanted to encourage additional new development to the north, a parking garage would most likely be required, possibly with a private/public partnership.

Chairman Stuebner opened up the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Paul Giagnorio, 994 Warren Avenue, owner of Scarletti's Italian Kitchen, discussed his long-term plan to stay in Downers Grove, was pleased to see the parking study being done, and agreed parking was an issue. Regarding the 15-minute parking spaces, he supported them, as he had a carry-out business besides the sit-down portion. He appreciated the village's effort to address the parking issues.

Ms. Linda Kunze, Downtown Management Corp., stated her board has worked with **Dir. Newlon** and the consultant and were pleased with the parking recommendations being discussed. Her board supported the study and she thanked the consultant for presenting figures and recommendations. She was surprised, as **Chairman Stuebner** was, that more businesses did not attend this meeting, as she did inform them prior. **Chairman Stuebner** concurred, as he would have preferred to hear their feedback via email or have them attend a meeting. **Ms. Kunze** did note, however, that if there were concerns from the merchants, the merchants did meet in her office, and those that could not meet, the consultant took phone surveys and spoke to them. **Mr. Wrobel** recalled that some of the owners attended the council meetings to voice their concerns and did not necessarily know the meeting process.

Other commissioner questions included whether there was consideration to reconfigure parking on Main Street to diagonal parking, to which **Mr. Burr** indicated it was not part of the study. Asked if there was consideration to have the downtown as pedestrian only, **Mr. Burr** indicated that this was not considered. And, as to purchasing private property for the public near the library, **Dir. Newlon** recalled the topic had been discussed but explained that the economics for surface lots did not work due to the value of the property to what is charged for surface lot, which was why a vertical structure was mentioned and would probably be driven by development and other factors. Lastly, asked if there was a study done on the percentage drop when inclement weather occurs, **Dir. Newlon** explained that the snow is hauled out of the downtown after it reaches a certain height.

Chairman Stuebner entertained a motion.

MS. VAN ANNE MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE PARKING STUDY AS PRESENTED, INCLUDING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS.

SECONDED BY MR. CRONIN.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 7-0.

**TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING COMMISSION
Minutes**

September 14, 2011, 7:00 p.m.

Council Chambers - Village Hall
801 Burlington Avenue, Downers Grove

Acting Chairman Schiller called to order the September 14, 2011 meeting of the Transportation and Parking Commission at 7:00 p.m.

The Acting Chairman led the commissioners and the public in the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

A review of the meeting's protocol followed. The chair reminded the public that the commission was a recommending body to the Village Council, and stated that the minutes were being recorded on village-owned equipment for transcription purposes.

Roll call followed and a quorum was established.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Acting Chairman Schiller, Members Mr. Cronin, Ms. Van Anne, Mr. Wrobel, Student Representative Ms. Celeste Aguzino

Absent: Members Patricia Vlcek, David Stuebner, Chris Saricks

Staff Present: Public Works Dir. Nan Newlon, Traffic Manager Dorin Fera; Officer Tim Sembach, Downers Grove Police Dept.

Visitors: Mr. Willis Johnson, 603 Rogers Street, Downers Grove

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Deferred to next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

1. File #08-11. Downtown Parking Study - Preliminary Report. Public Works Director Nan Newlon, announced that the consultants, Rich and Associates, were in attendance to make their second presentation of the downtown parking study and receive commissioner and public input. In October, an updated set of recommendations will be provided to the commissioners for final review and, hopefully, forwarded to the Village Council.

Messrs. Richard Rich and **Dave Burr** from Rich and Associates were introduced. **Mr. Burr** explained what exactly the presentation would cover and added that the calculation for the parking demand will be new to this presentation as well as best practices to make the parking work more efficiently. A recap of the initial scope of work and findings followed.

Mr. Rich explained that one of the best practices being recommended was the Shared Use Strategy, where parking spaces are shared between two businesses with different peak hours, i.e., one use may require more parking spaces in the AM and as the parking demand diminishes through the day, the other use will pick up those same spaces for its PM peak. In reviewing the various types of land uses for the parking demand, such as retail, restaurant, theater, office, medical office, etc., he pointed out that a peak time arises and coincides around the 12:00 Noon to 1:00 PM time period. Noting the Adjusted Observed Occupancy numbers, **Mr. Rich** explained that the theater demand was removed because it was not reflected in the spaces per use but was reflecting what the observed occupancy was.

After reviewing the various parking needs and the number of spaces generated, he noted how easy it was to see how it correlates to what was observed. A further clarification followed on how the parking generation rate was applied by the type of land use followed by the parking demand for a specific block. Those blocks that were depicted as green or blue in color, the total parking demand exceeded the total parking supply on the block. Blocks depicted in yellow reflected that the total calculated parking supply on the block was insufficient to support the total calculated demand on the block. The parking supply for the evening hours also reflected the use of the commuter spaces. Other scenarios were reviewed.

Deficiencies in the parking demand were reviewed by **Mr. Burr**, with him discussing that, overall, there was a 1,081 space surplus, while the demand was for 1,680 spaces, which assumed that the surplus private capacity was available, which it was not. Taking that into account, **Mr. Burr** then explained that the surplus private supply spaces were then removed and each block was reviewed for its parking demand and matched to the available private supply. If a surplus existed, those spaces were taken out of the equation. Under that calculation, the 1,081 surplus spaces were reduced to 368 surplus spaces for the entire downtown.

In the last portion of the calculation, **Mr. Burr** explained that not only were the surplus private spaces removed but the remote public spaces were removed, reducing the north side total spaces from 225 surplus spaces down to 11 surplus spaces during the daytime hours.

Mr. Burr stated that the above information confirms that there is a parking problem in the village's downtown area.

A review of the net available parking supply also followed with **Mr. Burr** stating that based on the parking generation factors, approximately 130,000 sq. feet of retail space could be developed, or, 69,500 sq. feet of dining space, or, 1900 theater seats created. Further examples of development followed, noting that if any new development were to occur, it would have to include additional parking.

In conclusion, **Mr. Burr** reported that the public supply of parking spaces was 85% occupied and the private supply was about 55% occupied at peak. Commuter parking was stressed and excluding the private surplus spaces and the remote public spaces north of the tracks, 97% was being occupied while the south was at 85% occupied.

As to best practices, **Mr. Burr** reported that a municipality should control at least 50% of the available parking through allocation, pricing, availability and use. Citing Downers Grove, **Mr. Burr** reported that only 45% was being controlled by the village. Rather than constructing more parking, he summarized that he reviewed the village's current parking and considered how it could be used more efficiently, recommending the village to reach out to the private land owners to supply them with parking spaces for commuters and/or employees, via permits. Additionally, another recommendation was to convert the prime commuter lots to shopper parking.

Reviewing handicap spaces, **Mr. Burr** reported the village was 10 spaces short and recommended adding them. Reviewing parking enforcement, **Mr. Burr** stated it was to change drivers' behaviors and not so much penalize them. It was recommended that a first time violator be issued a "courtesy ticket", basically, thanking a customer for visiting the Village but in the future to encourage them to park in the appropriate parking space/location, so as not to overstay their time limit. Additionally, he recommended that enforcement occur on random days and have the village enact an "anti-shuffling ordinance" for vehicles. Other recommendations included adding bike racks and provide better lighting, specifically in Lot D, and trimming back certain landscaping.

As for best practices for transportation terminals, **Mr. Burr** stated a “Kiss and Ride” was appropriate to drop off transit users outside of the permitted areas, add bike lockers, and address any other security concerns in order to make pedestrians and transit users feel safe; otherwise, he stated if they did not feel safe, they would park illegally somewhere else. Specifically, the recommendation he suggested was to use some spaces just outside of Lot B for short-term Kiss and Ride spaces until 8:00 AM, thereby leaving the spaces available for the longer term parking.

Other recommendations also included the village to consider a paving assessment of the various parking areas to review parking surfaces for potholes, cracks, and whether striping and lighting was adequate, etc. Regarding signage, **Mr. Burr** recommended that the village incorporate into its current signage program the introduction sign, the identification sign, and the directional sign. Pedestrian navigation signs and way-finding kiosks should also be incorporated where possible, near the parking area. **Mr. Burr** discussed that marketing materials and brochures should be designed to educate the public and businesses as to what is occurring in the downtown area. Lastly, he recommended that the village encourage businesses to provide links to the village parking website on their own business web site.

Regarding shopper/employee parking spaces, many of which were in commuter lots, **Mr. Burr** noted that during the day these spaces were really not available and the signage had to be very clear on what was being conveyed to the drivers. Valet spaces could be better marked also.

Addressing user fee best practices, **Mr. Rich** explained that striping and parking allocation were important and that it was the simplest way for the village to control parking and charge various fees based on convenience. Monthly parking fees charged from various surrounding communities were presented for comparison purposes and **Mr. Rich** recommended that the village adjust them based on convenience to the train station and institute a program of gradual rate increases to fund parking improvements. Lastly, he noted that the top floor of the parking deck has weekend free parking which could become a “dumping” ground for commuters traveling to downtown Chicago to avoid paying high parking fees or avoid paying parking fees at an airport. He stated the village had the capacity to charge for that parking.

Other recommendations included reviewing Lot F for pot holes; consider loading zones; consider the top level of the deck for part-time employees; consider short-term parking (15 min.) spaces for certain uses, i.e., dry cleaners, bakeries, take out restaurants, and position them at the beginning or end of the blocks with the clear signage. Short-term spaces could also be utilized by the library (30 to 90 minutes).

Mr. Burr closed by summarizing the recommendations as described above and again, asked for commissioner thoughts and feedback.

Acting Chairman Schiller opened up the discussion to the commissioners. **Mr. Cronin** asked for clarification on how the village would approach private property owners to make their parking spaces available to the public, wherein **Dir. Newlon** explained that at one time the village did have an agreement with AT&T to use parking on their site, but it lapsed. She reported that the village has had a history of doing these types of arrangements before. **Mr. Burr** explained that sometimes a municipality will offer to improve a private owner’s lot also and enforce the parking on it, with a long-term lease or agreement. And, if a private lot was being underutilized, he said sometimes it was enticing to an owner.

Responding to **Mr. Cronin’s** question again, **Dir. Newlon** recalled that commuters utilized the former AT&T parking lot, but sometimes it could be utilized by employees. **Mr. Rich** also added

that when approaching some of the churches who seem to be reluctant to release parking spaces, he suggested working with them to find out if their needs are for commuter or employee spaces. **Mr. Cronin** seemed to feel that private parking would have to be designated as either employees or commuters and nothing else.

As to the village being short 10 handicap spaces, **Acting Chairman Schiller** asked if the ADA had a specific requirement for spaces, wherein **Mr. Burr** explained that the ADA requirements were based on the number of lot spaces provided. Asked how much control does the village have on what it charges commuters and can the village vary its pricing based on proximity to the train station, **Dir. Newlon** explained that she, along with legal staff, have been reviewing all agreements with Metra and the BNSF to see what options exist to do that but one of the criteria was the total number of parking spaces in the downtown area are committed to providing for commuters. The other factor, she explained, was that the village could not charge more than \$3.00 for the daily fee. However, as she understood, there was no concrete number for what the village could charge for parking permits. **Dir. Newlon** expected to have more information for the commissioners before the final recommendations.

Mr. Wrobel commented he attended a prior library board meeting where the library purchased parking spots in either the parking deck or the commuter parking area for the library director and a few others on the payroll. He asked if there were other municipal or businesses purchasing permits to park in commuter parking spaces on a regular basis and, if so, he recommended that those individuals negotiate with a private lot. **Dir. Newlon**, however, presumed the library was probably purchasing a Level 2 parking permit, just as any other business could purchase, and it was a shared parking spot and not designated. She agreed with **Mr. Wrobel** that individuals could seek private owners for parking spaces and relieve the parking deck. Asked if the village was negotiating with any of the businesses, such as the theater, as to making some of their spaces available for commuter parking, **Dir. Newlon** clarified that the village was discussing the idea conceptually, but that it could be part of the formal recommendation.

Mr. Cronin asked if the village could control signage in private lots for consistency purposes.

Conversation followed on what happens when drivers park inappropriately on private lots and how do such lots get enforced if drivers park cars on lawns or behind a store.

Ms. Van Anne, understanding that employees were taking advantage of street parking on Saturdays, asked whether the employee parking at the deck was less utilized on Saturday. In response, **Mr. Rich** stated the deck was used due to the Farmer's Market taking place but clearly the peak on Saturday was in the morning and then a decline occurred throughout the day.

Acting Chairman Schiller supported having the shorter parking time limits but questioned police staff if it was difficult to enforce. In response, **Ofr. Sembach** indicated it was not.

Ms. Van Anne asked whether the pursuit of private parking spaces would just mean more commuter spaces and then transition current commuter parking to public parking, wherein **Mr. Rich** believed the village was already over-supplying the amount of commuter parking and the need was to take the prime commuter spaces and make them available for businesses.

Mr. Willis Johnson, 603 Rogers St., Downers Grove, stated he owns the Tivoli Building. He clarified that he is focusing on holding more daytime events, commenting that DeVry University will be holding its annual meeting in his building next week. **Mr. Johnson** noted that the bowling alley was also open during daytime hours, along with other businesses within the building, such as the residents of the hotel which utilize the parking lot. He did oppose the

recommended 10 to 15 minute parking spaces but asked how those spots would be calculated and allocated, i.e. by business or geographically disbursed throughout the area? In response, **Mr. Rich** stated they would be geographically disbursed, usually at each end of a block and then shared by the businesses of that block.

Asked if the village's recent technology could issue the courtesy ticket mentioned earlier, and when would it start, **Mr. Burr** responded that it would be up to the community to decide the parameter, but typically, it was six months. **Mr. Johnson** asked for more specifics on the recommendation to have commuter spaces available before 9:00 AM, which he supported. **Mr. Burr** followed up on the question but stated no specific time was decided upon. **Dir. Newlon** believed the time was tied to the enforcement practice. Regarding on-street shopper parking, **Mr. Johnson** asked what the consultant would recommend as a time limit, wherein **Mr. Burr** stated that two hours was appropriate, as it provided a turnover for the spaces. Longer time spaces would be located near the restaurants and shops.

Discussing user fees, **Mr. Johnson** assumed user fees would not be charged to shoppers. **Mr. Rich** concurred explaining that usually once meters are removed and then returned, business owners are not supportive of them. Lastly, **Mr. Johnson** hoped that if a private lot was to become a commuter lot, that it be used to reallocate commuter spaces and not to increase commuter spaces. In response to **Mr. Cronin's** question of why **Mr. Johnson** did not prefer the 10 to 15 minute parking spots, **Mr. Johnson** said they took up spaces that individuals could use for 2 or 3 hours and they were usually abused, but he understood why certain businesses wanted them though.

Dir. Newlon explained that this item is tentatively scheduled to be presented to Council, but that the best possible date would be the middle of October. To accomplish this, the next TAP Commission meeting would need to be moved up by one week, to occur on October 5th. She asked commissioners to check their calendars, and they would be contacted by staff to receive their responses regarding this date change.

OLD BUSINESS - None

COMMUNICATIONS - None

ADJOURN

ACTING CHAIRMAN SCHILLER MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:25 P.M. MR. WROBEL SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Celeste Weilandt,
Recording Secretary
(as transcribed by digital recording)

**TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING COMMISSION
Minutes**

August 10, 2011, 7:00 p.m.

Council Chambers - Village Hall
801 Burlington Avenue, Downers Grove

Co-Chairman Gress called to order the August 10, 2011 meeting of the Transportation and Parking Commission at 7:00 p.m.

The Chairman led the commissioners and the public in the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call followed and a quorum was established.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Co-Chairman Wendt, Co-Chairman Gress, Members Mr. Cronin, Mr. Saricks, Mr. Schiller, Mr. Stuebner, Student Representative Robert Clark

Absent: Ms. Van Anne

Staff Present: Public Works Dir. Nan Newlon, Traffic Manager Dorin Fera, Police Parking Enforcement Supervisor Timothy Sembach.

Visitors: Mr. Lucas Maxa, Lisle, IL; Mr. Greg Doody, 940 Warren, Downers Grove; Ms. Cookie Radeko, 940 Warren, Downers Grove; Mr. Graham Mosey, 4925 Forest Ave., Downers Grove; Ms. Bobby Bishop, 5151 Mochel Drive, Downers Grove; Ms. Linda Kunze, 933 Curtiss, Downers Grove; Mr. Mark Thoman, 1109 61st St., Downers Grove; Mr. Bill Wrobel, 7800 Queens Ct., Downers Grove; Dave and Marilyn Weiher, 935 Curtiss, #4, Downers Grove

Co-Chairman Gress reviewed the protocol for the meeting, reminded the public that the commission was a recommending body to the Village Council, and stated that the minutes were being recorded on village-owned equipment for transcription purposes.

APPROVAL OF THE JULY 13, 2011 TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING COMMISSION MINUTES. Deferred to next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

1. File #08-11. Downtown Parking Study - Preliminary Report. Ms. Nan Newlon, Director of Public Works, summarized that tonight's presentation will provide preliminary data collected to date for the downtown parking study. From tonight's meeting, the consultant will take back feedback not only from this meeting but from the recent steering committee meeting, as well as from staff and then a draft of the recommendations will be provided in a final study which will be presented next month.

Messrs. Richard Rich and Dave Burr from Rich and Associates were introduced. **Mr. Burr** explained that much of the study was a status update of the field work that was completed back in June, which basically comprised of existing parking inventory, parking counts, on-line customer surveys of visitors, Metra commuters, downtown residents, and downtown business owners and employees. One item that will be forthcoming will be the calculation of the parking demand by land use and best practices will be reviewed as compared to other communities; parking allocation, etc. A description of the various survey data followed.

The on-line survey that was taken listed that one of the main purposes individuals traveled to the downtown was for work, followed by services, shopping, dining, and other (library,

appointments, entertainment). The major response to the on-line survey asking the question of why people avoid traveling to the downtown area, was due to difficult parking. As to the ease of locating an on-street parking space, many individuals disagreed with the statement. As to locating a general parking space, again, individuals disagreed and believed it was difficult to find a space. As to the directional signs for parking, individuals believed they were easy to follow. Time limits for on-street parking appeared to be reasonable. A review of the defined study area followed.

Discussing best practices, **Mr. Burr** reported that a benchmark used by a community to minimally control parking is about 50% percent. The village currently had 53% public parking available: on-street spaces, various commuter lots and the parking garage. However, the public parking north of the tracks was deficient at about 40-41%. Turnover counts, taken hourly on two different dates were also reviewed for the north and south sides of the BNSF RR. Of the 3,065 parking spaces analyzed, approximately 2200 were occupied during peak times (12:00 noon). Details followed regarding parking on the north and south sides of the tracks.

Peak hour occupancy did differ between north and south of the BNSF RR tracks. **Mr. Burr** reported that the areas in red were the areas that the parking occupancy during peak hour was in excess of 85% occupied, which was a perception. Individuals felt that there was a parking issue and that while there was parking available, perceptually, individuals felt they had to "hunt" for a parking space. The areas in yellow reflected a 70 - 84% occupancy and the areas of green and blue reflected 50% and lower. Those parking spaces with the highest occupancy achieved were also reviewed. Of the 921 commuter parking spaces, 850 spaces were peaked at 9:00 AM. One interesting item found was that commuters boarded the train by 8:15 AM, which was about 97% of all commuters.

Public parking and private parking figures were broken out, noting that private parking spaces were at surplus capacity. Out of the 1255 spaces, it was peaking just above 700 spaces which was understandable, given that a private business may own 10 spaces but only use 2 or 3 spaces. A review of the parking deck followed by each level. Overall, **Mr. Burr** explained that the parking garage was achieving about 90% occupancy. Turnover rates were explained and the fact that one of the misleading things about turnover was that a low turnover number could exist either because there were few vehicles using the space or because vehicles were staying in the space for an extended period of time. One thing that was identified with the turnover spaces were the spaces in violation (pink colored areas), wherein vehicles were identified as staying over their time limit. About 6% of the vehicles were in violation; the benchmark was no more than 5%.

Weekend parking figures were reviewed and noted to be lower than a weekday. Occupancy and turnover violations on Saturdays did increase slightly to 10%. **Mr. Burr** believed it was due to employees using the spaces because enforcement did not occur on Saturdays. Another observance was the fact that some employees were moving their vehicles every couple of hours. Other statistics followed for the Tivoli Theater parking lot. Parking signage was also reviewed, noting signage has to be in clear view, consistent, and easy to read and understand.

In closing, **Mr. Burr** reported that the public parking was stressed, more parking was available on the south side of the tracks versus the north, and enforcement was working well except for the two hour shuffle of vehicles, which needed to be eliminated. Comments received at previous meetings included providing 15 to 20 minute parking, improving the signage, having better clarification of valet parking, and encouraging commuters not to park at the Main Street station but instead use Fairmont or Belmont stations, thereby increasing the downtown parking spaces by 5% and opening up about 40 spaces. The time limits for parking spaces currently

seemed appropriate to accommodate patrons. Other summarizations followed, along with samples of consistent way-finding signage.

Additional recommendations from the study included better lighting of parking lots and providing better security by trimming the landscaping.

Mr. Burr closed by reviewing his next steps and asking for feedback tonight in order to formulate some recommendations for the next presentation.

Asked if the handicap spaces will be measured, **Mr. Burr** stated that those spaces were broken out separately and were identified and mapped out. To date, the ADA recently came out with newly recommended off-street handicap parking requirements, which information will be reviewed. **Co-Chairman Gress** inquired about revenue generation from the permit parking and the daily parking and whether any recommendations would be forthcoming to increase those fees. **Mr. Rich**, responded that the information was collected but was part of an overall package and a demand analysis would have to be completed for now and in the future. He explained that he preferred seeing a parking system finance the improvements that the village wanted and it was important to formulate the necessary recommendations and estimated costs for those recommendations/improvements and figure out how to pay for them, such as user fees. Another option he suggested included changing an individual's behavior by changing the parking rate in certain areas.

Because there was a limited parking capacity, **Mr. Saricks** asked if **Mr. Rich** planned to review the impact of increasing fees and whether losing customers would result. **Mr. Rich** stated that the population that would be affected would be the commuter or the employee. If the rate was going to be increased, he cautioned the village to be careful in doing so because those individuals needed a place to go. **Director Newlon** stated that there could be room to increase the permit fee since the maximum was being charged for the daily fee.

Mr. Schiller pointed out that the most desirable spaces were the spaces closest to the Metra train, and because prices were basically locked in due to the Metra contract, it limited the ability to modify pricing anywhere else other than the parking deck. In discussing the north side, large parking lot for the AT&T building, **Mr. Saricks** asked the traffic consultant whether it was fair to include the lot in the north side study, wherein **Mr. Burr** believed it probably was not fair, which was why he reiterated that this was the first go-around of the study. **Mr. Rich** added that these types of lots offered opportunities by having the village enter into an agreement with the owners of these lots.

Asked if the library could have limited parking, **Mr. Burr** stated one of the issues around the library was the additional enforcement needed. Overnight parking will be addressed also.

Co-Chairman Gress opened up the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Graham Mosey, 4925 Forest Avenue, Downers Grove, believed the parking basically addressed convenience. He asked what kind of parking increase would be provided at the Belmont Station. **Ms. Newlon** believed it would be comparable to what was there initially. She would research it, however.

Asked if staff had discussed with Metra the shifting of some of the non-stop trains away from the downtown station, **Ms. Newlon** stated she did discuss it with them but the issue was a switch located between the Main Street station and the Fairview station.

Mr. Mosey stated it would be interesting to know what kind of parking was not being used at the Fairview station, since whomever was controlling the commuter spaces there had the ability to shift individuals where they would like to go based on a fee structure and allocating the spaces. He stated it would be interesting to know what type of revenue was generated from enforcement. As to signage, he supported a uniform system in the village, similar to the system used in Europe. He discussed the changing business cycles and the fact that more parking will be necessary at times while at other times it may not. As a suggestion, **Mr. Mosey** asked the consultant to look at private parking for the commuters.

The topic of the Park and Ride usage numbers came up and the fact that the information would be included in the consultant's presentation.

Ms. Marilyn Weiher, 935 Curtiss Street, said she owns a commercial property in downtown and voiced concern about moving some of the express trains out of downtown, since a couple of her tenants were doing the reverse commute to Chicago. She asked for consideration.

Ms. Linda Kunze, Downers Grove Downtown Management Corporation, suggested that when reviewing the time when the parking spaces open up to the employees, she encouraged to open up as early as nine o'clock because most of the village's employees started between 9:30 and 10:00 AM. Additionally, she was pleased to see consideration of moving the commuters to Belmont or Fairview Metra Stations. She also added that the S.B. Friedman study showed that commuters focus on getting to their cars and traveling to their homes. She appreciated the village having a plan. Asked if there was the possibility of negotiating with Metra to open up one of the parking areas closer to the train for general parking, a consultant responded that unless there was an exchange of something, Metra would probably not negotiate. **Ms. Newlon** described some previous negotiations with Metra and offered to look at other options.

Mr. Saricks asked whether the changes occurring at Belmont Metra Station, due to the underpass, were leading Metra to shift a few express trains to that location, wherein **Ms. Newlon** thought it would make for a good discussion with Metra's new head person. She believed it made sense since it was a good regional station and confirmed that Burlington representatives would be in the discussion.

In closing, **Director Newlon** stated that the presentation slides will be forwarded electronically to the commissioners and will also be posted on the village's web site.

OLD BUSINESS - None

COMMUNICATIONS - See attachment in staff's report, if any.

ADJOURN

MR. SARICKS MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:20 P.M. MR. WENDT SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Celeste Weilandt,
Recording Secretary
(as transcribed by digital recording)