

CITY OF FLAGSTAFF

MEMO:

To: The Honorable Mayor and Council

From: Kevin Burke, City Manager
Karl Eberhard, Community Design & Redevelopment

Date: July 22, 2009

Meeting Date: August 25, 2009

Re: **Presentation of Central Business District Parking Study (2009),
and Concept Downtown Management Plan (2009)**



The Honorable Mayor and Council,

The Central Business District Parking Study identifies, updates, and quantifies parking management issues in the downtown. Stakeholder input, along with previous studies and plans, describes downtown maintenance and management issues. The Concept Downtown Management Plan suggests a comprehensive solution for parking management, parking creation, long term downtown maintenance and operations, and the provision of services that are unique to the downtown environment. From this presentation of the Central Business District Parking Study and the Concept Downtown Management Plan, Staff seeks City Council direction regarding moving forward with the Downtown Management Plan.

Background/History:

On February 5, 2008, the City Council adopted a Downtown Management Plan in a resolution that included a detailed action plan, a part of which was retaining an outside consultant for a comprehensive parking study to complete additional analysis of parking demand and parking generators and exploring additional parking solutions, possibly including a parking garage (Resolution No. 2008-05). In response to Request for Proposal No. 28101, on July 22, 2008, the City Council accepted the proposal and the contract was awarded to Rich and Associates, Inc. for the Central Business District Parking Study.

The scope of work of the Central Business District Parking Study included working with the stakeholders and the public to review existing studies and background information, surveying existing parking conditions, analyze current and future parking demand and parking supply, make recommendations of feasible parking solutions in architectural and financial detail, and production of an implementation plan. The Consultants have completed the study on budget, and per the scope of work, notably including more stakeholder and public outreach than anticipated. The final draft was released for final public review in mid-June of 2009 and the study was completed in late July 2009. Final report is attached.

As the parking study was wrapping up, it became clear to the City Manager, City Staff, and key stakeholders that the Downtown Management Plan needed to incorporate parking system implementation strategies. This led to the development of a Concept Downtown Management Plan that is built upon the previous DMP and the parking study, but that also addresses the unresolved issues of the previous DMP. The attached Concept Downtown Management Plan comprehensively addresses feasible solutions for parking management, parking creation, long term downtown maintenance and operations, and the provision of other services that are unique to the downtown environment.

Key Considerations:

Central Business District Parking Study - The attached Central Business District Parking Study identifies and quantifies key considerations including:

1. Thirty percent of the public parking is being occupied by business owners and employees without turnover as a result of being free and having insufficient and lenient enforcement.
2. Downtown has approximately thirty percent public parking and seventy percent private parking when best practices suggest that the ratio should be at least fifty-fifty, or better, nearly the reverse ratio.
3. Downtown has an outright shortage of approximately 600 parking spaces and the shortage is consistent in spite of the time of day, day of the week, or the season.
4. Due to the presence of many small private lots, Flagstaff is not experiencing "park once" downtown users, rather that users drive from one location to another, congesting traffic and missing the downtown experience.
5. In addition to outright free parking, Flagstaff as a matter of course gives away parking, either through zoning requirements or variances.
6. Shared parking is not an option for Flagstaff because our "peak times" are not staggered and our shortage is consistent through the day, the week, and the year.
7. The study recommends creating public parking – both immediately and long term projects, including garages.
8. The study recommends changes to the zoning requirements for parking to include requiring less private parking for most of downtown, but specifically instituting in-lieu-of parking fees.
9. Additional parking management recommendations include the installation of parking meters, a residential permit parking program, enhanced parking enforcement, parking marketing, and a way-finding signage program.
10. The study includes important construction and O&M costs, as well as financing options for parking, most notably for the garages.

Concept Downtown Management Plan - The attached Concept Downtown Management Plan describes the following key considerations in detail:

1. Governed by a board that consists of business owners, property owners, and City representatives, a Property and Business Improvement District (PBID) appears to be the right entity that can serve as a parking authority, an enhanced management and promotion district, and also as a community facilities district.
 - a. The PBID would include Zones of Benefit, wherein services vary depending on the location of a property within the district.
 - b. Start-up funds for the PBID come from the BBB – Beautification Fund, the Downtown Fund, and funds coming from the coalition of the Downtown Business Alliance, The Southside Community Association, and the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association (The Coalition).
 - c. The PBID would include parking revenues, assessments, and a maintenance contract as permanent income streams.
2. The plan envisions re-striping some of the on-street parking, creating one-way, one-lane streets, and immediately creating approximately sixty new parking spaces that will serve as an interim parking solution until the garages are built, but that will also mitigate the “parking refugee” issue.
3. The construction of garages is envisioned to be paid for using an Economic Development Administration Grant and City General Obligation Bonds, with the PBID repaying approximately half of the bond, such that the construction will ultimately be paid approximately one third by the Federal government, one third by the City of Flagstaff, and one third by the PBID.
4. This plan currently assumes that parking meters are installed in conjunction with the installation of interim parking and they serve to immediately address the parking turn-over issue, to fund in-part the PBID start-up, and to save funds in advance of the garage construction so as to reduce the financed amount.
5. In conjunction with the installation of interim parking, parking permit programs would be developed to serve both residential and business parkers and to further mitigate the “parking refugee” issue.
6. The provision of some basic municipal services would be provided by the PBID under contract to the City of Flagstaff and the PBID can also provide additional or enhanced services, as they determine desirable, under the same organizational structure.
7. Changes to the Zoning Ordinance would be instituted that would generally reduce private parking requirements in the urban core, including eliminating them altogether in the very core and adjacent to the garages, and that would permit in-lieu-of parking fees.
8. Even though the plan is only a concept sketch, some detail has been included to demonstrate financial feasibility and to suggest realistic time frames for various components of the plan.
9. The plan concludes with discussion about the next steps should the City Council concur that this concept appears workable and warrants further study.

Community Benefits and Considerations:

Representing a vast amount of public and private investment, the continued health, and investment in downtown is consistent with its service as an employment, business, and government center that provides unique shopping, dining, and entertainment opportunities, and is consistent with its service as our most important tourist attraction, and as a community, heritage, and cultural hub where fifty percent of all permitted events are held. Impediments to the economic vitality of downtown are impediments to the economic vitality of the community as a whole. Parking, municipal services, and downtown management are identified issues in downtown that are addressed by the Concept Downtown Management Plan and supported by the Central Business District Parking Study.

Community Involvement:

The Central Business District Parking Study and the Concept Downtown Management Plan have been developed working with four segments of the public:

1. Parking Generators – Including representatives of the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, Northern Arizona University, the Southside Community Association, and the Downtown Business Alliance (DBA).
2. City Manager's Downtown Advisory Committee – Including representatives of the DBA, representatives of the Southside Community Association (SSCA), business owners not associated with the DBA or SSCA, residents of the North End District, downtown employees, and downtown property owners.
3. Key Stakeholders – Reaching beyond the above groups to additional downtown business and property owners, government agency representatives, and community organization representatives.
4. General Public

Outreach strategies have included one-on-one meetings, small groups, formal groups, and open houses conducted at each milestone of development. And, the City Manager and/or City Staff have presented materials to any group or individual that has asked. All materials, including survey results, presentations, analysis, and draft and final reports, have been immediately and readily available on the internet, with broad email notification of availability.

Financial Implications:

The Central Business District Parking Study has been completed within the budgeted amount of \$100,000.

The Concept Downtown Management Plan will have some start-up expenses associated with it that would be funded from a variety of sources including the BBB – Beautification Fund, the Downtown Fund, The Coalition, and parking revenues (meters and permits). Additional support from business and property owners will be necessary and additional City support will be necessary at least in the form of staff time, such as for technical and legal matters. Permanent

funding will be further defined as the plan is developed, but the conceptual funding vision is addressed within the plan.

Options/Alternatives:

1. Continue to develop the Concept Downtown Management Plan as presented.
2. Develop the plan per any City Council direction regarding specific items.
3. Discontinue development of the plan.

Attachments/Exhibits:

1. Central Business District Parking Study (2009) - [Under Separate Cover]
2. Concept Downtown Management Plan (2009)
3. Resolution No. 2008-05 – Adopting the Downtown Flagstaff Management Plan