

## MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Council  
City Manager Charles Strome III  
Commissioner of Development Michael Freimuth

Cc: Marc Jerome  
Ralph DiBart  
Joan McCallion  
George Rainone

Fr: Mayor Noam Bramson

Re: Downtown Parking Regulations

Date: October 6, 2010

As you know, the staff presented last month a preliminary analysis of the recently-adopted downtown parking regulations, with the suggestion for further study. In addition, Ralph DiBart is scheduled to appear before the Council next week to outline several BID initiatives, including an examination of parking meter technology.

The public comments I have received to date on the new parking regulations have been uniformly negative, and I believe that some aspects of the City's current policy are illogical on their face. Therefore, I am committing to writing in this memorandum and the attached spreadsheet my own suggestions for improvement, with the request that these possibilities be evaluated in the context of the studies referenced above.

**Variable Rate Structure to Optimize Usage:** The major flaw in the current rate structure is its application of a one-size-fits-all standard to parking facilities with very different qualities. A variable rate structure should correspond to levels of parking demand that shift by location and time of day, and should contain incentives to optimize use patterns. Specifically:

- Off-street parking should generally be more affordable than on-street
- Turnover and availability should be prioritized in areas with highest demand
- Overnight parking by permit should be more affordable than by meter
- Reasonable options for overnight parking should be available for guests
- Options for free parking should be available in low-demand areas and times
- Overnight parking on-street should be prevented

**Suggested Rate Structure Attached:** The attached excel spreadsheet offers one possible rate structure that meets these tests. My intent is not necessarily to press for every detail within it, but to offer general concepts for consideration. It divides the downtown into two zones – Zone A in the heart of the Central Business District includes the highest concentration of restaurants, and Zone B encompasses the remainder of the downtown. The rate structure also divides the day into four periods of time: business hours, dining hours, late night, and overnight.

**Simple From Consumer Perspective:** A rate structure of this kind appears complicated, but would actually be quite simple from a consumer perspective. The parking machines, properly programmed, would do all the calculations and just tell the parker how much they owe. Signage would only have to state clearly the hours during which parking is free and during which it is not.

**Implement with Technology:** Such a rate structure would require reprogramming the new machines that have already been installed and introducing machines at the parking facilities that do not yet have them. The implementation of new rates may, therefore, need to be timed to coincide with the installation of appropriate machines.

**Keep Sundays Free:** I recommend maintaining the policy of free parking, both on and off-street, on Sundays from 8:00am to 8:00pm.

**Time Limits:** I recommend maintaining the two-hour on-street parking limit, but allowing parking up to 24 hours in off-street lots. I do not expect the latter option to be used frequently, given the availability of much lower-cost options for those who park on a regular basis, but it is sensible to provide the option for those willing to pay a premium.

**Preserve One-to-One Parking Requirement:** One of the chief motivations for introducing the new parking regulations was to better assess the adequacy of the one-to-one on-site parking requirement attached to residential development in the central business district. The data presented so far suggests strongly that the one-to-one requirement is adequate. Avalon had excess on-site parking prior to the implementation of the new rules, and they still have excess parking now (albeit slightly less.) Unless further analysis paints a different picture, it seems to me that

raising the on-site parking requirement could seriously impede future development, without achieving any public benefit. I remain open to the concept of integrating parking into rent/lease payments, if a workable means of achieving this objective can be devised. The distinction here is between the physical adequacy of private parking facilities on the one hand and the full use of such facilities on the other.