



**AGENDA
CITY OF CEDAR FALLS, IOWA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MONDAY, JUNE 07, 2021
6:10 PM AT CITY HALL**

The City is providing in-person and electronic options for this meeting in accordance with the Governor's Proclamation of Disaster Emergency regarding meetings and hearings. The City encourages in-person attendees to follow the latest CDC guidelines to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

The meeting will be accessible via video conference and the public may access/participate in the meeting in the following ways:

- a) By dialing the phone number +13126266799 or +19292056099 or +12532158782 or +13017158592 or +13462487799 or +16699006833 and when prompted, enter the meeting ID (access code) 962 7287 1738.
- b) iPhone one-tap: +13126266799,,96272871738# or +19292056099,,96272871738#
- c) Join via smartphone or computer using this link: <https://zoom.us/j/96272871738>.
- d) View the live stream on Channel 15 YouTube using this link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCzeig5nIS-dIEYisqah1uQ> (view only).
- e) Watch on Cedar Falls Cable Channel 15 (view only).

To request to speak when allowed on the agenda, participants must click "Raise Hand" if connected by smartphone or computer, or press *9 if connected by telephone. All participants will be muted by the presiding officer when not actually speaking.

Call to Order by the Mayor

1. Downtown & College Hill Parking Policy Discussion.
(40 Minutes)



FINANCE & BUSINESS OPERATIONS

CITY OF CEDAR FALLS, IOWA
220 CLAY STREET
CEDAR FALLS, IOWA 50613
319-273-8600
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MEMORANDUM

Public Records Division

TO: Honorable Mayor Green and City Council Members
FROM: Jacque Danielsen, City Clerk
DATE: June 3, 2021
SUBJECT: Downtown & College Hill Parking Policy Discussion

On March 1, 2021 City Council extended the suspension of paid parking in all municipal parking lots from April 1, 2021 to August 1, 2021.

Since that time, the City has received a request from Community Main Street to permanently suspend paid parking in the municipal lots. That request is attached.

Additionally, since the parking study recommendations also affect parking in the College Hill area, the College Hill Partnership has submitted a response which is also attached.

To aid in the discussion, you will also find attached Excerpts from the Parking Studies, Parking Study and Recommendations Summary which outlines the history and investments made to implement the recommendations, and the Parking Presentation from December 9, 2020. With the August 1st date fast approaching, staff is looking for direction from City Council in moving forward.

Please feel free to contact me with questions. Thank you.



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**2020-2021
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May 7, 2021

Mayor, City Administrator, and Council Members
City of Cedar Falls, IA
Cedar Falls City Hall
220 Clay Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

RE: Parking

Dear Mayor, City Administrator, and Council Members-

In response to the feedback and opinions expressed at the Parking Town Hall Meeting held on March 25, 2021, the CMS executive committee has brought forward the following recommendations to the board and were approved at the April 13th board meeting.

The overwhelming response from stakeholders was that the paid lot system is hurting downtown businesses. The overwhelming request is to revert back to the paid lot system pre-parking study recommendation implementation. We are therefore requesting the city council return the city lots to being free with a four-hour limit, understanding that this will require an ordinance change.

The stakeholders also recognize there is an issue with employees parking in the lots that we need for customers. CMS exec proposes that CMS immediately establishes and manages an employee parking task force. This task force will focus on block-by-block, and business-by-business solutions to move employees to 24-hour spaces and partnerships with local businesses who have private lots that aren't fully utilized.

There are many elements of the parking study implementation that have been positive and well received by the business owners. This includes the expansion of spaces on State Street, addition of three-hour parking on side streets and inclusion of 24 hours spaces. The stakeholders are also very grateful for the city's support in adding 15-minute spaces in response to the increase in take-out and curbside service.

We have reached a critical juncture with downtown paid parking. If someone wants to go out to eat or go shopping, there are a lot of other options outside of the downtown district that are free and are becoming more attractive to our customers. By having paid parking, we risk driving people away from the district and our fear is that they won't return. We hope the city will see this request as a collective voice and request from the downtown district stakeholders. Thank you for your continued support of downtown and Community Main Street.

Regards,

Kim Bear

Kim Bear, on behalf of the Community Main Street Board of Directors





College Hill Partnership

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3 June 2021

To: Mayor Green & Cedar Falls City Council

Cedar Falls, IA 50613

Mayor Green and Members of the Cedar Falls City Council:

At the College Hill Partnership board meeting on May 10th, 2021, the board members unanimously voted to compose a letter with our views on the next steps regarding the public parking system on the Hill. As you consider returning to the paid plan, we hope to identify some nuances as the economic environment has changed since the survey was conducted.

The parking study proved the need for better management of the public parking assets on the Hill. This improved management included extending the enforcement hours, implementing a technologically improved paid system, expanding the Hill's public parking options, and other minor changes to the system. The parking study also verified two additional items regarding the parking on College Hill:

1. Parking demand for the College Hill area prominently depends on the University
2. Currently, there is ample public parking on the Hill if the system is managed property in coordination with the University.

Having this information, the CHP Board would like the council to consider making a minor change to the system before removing the suspension of the paid lots. The board requests that the paid system only functions during the time the University is in session.

We understand the request of the downtown district to return public lots to a time system and removing the paid requirement for parking lots. This potential change brings some questions we would like the council to consider:

1. How would removing the paid system impact enforcement in the College Hill District?
2. How would removing the paid system impact the capital improvements for the College Hill District?
3. Suppose one district generates more revenue (fines & fees) than the other district. Will capital improvements and enforcement be prioritized by need or by the district that produces more funds?
4. If the council decides to revert to the old system in one district and not the other,

- a. Will that lead to customers choosing businesses in one district over the other because they will not have to pay for parking?
- b. Will citizens of Cedar Falls and patrons of our commercial districts see the benefits of the paid system specifically in the area that is generating the income?

The CHP understands both districts have unique needs and offerings. However, we must advocate for the betterment of our neighborhood and promote an equal playing field for the businesses on the Hill.

Regards,



Kathryn Sogard, Executive Director

College Hill Partnership
on Behalf of the Partnership Board Of Directors

Excerpts from Parking Studies

General observations:

Proper management of existing public parking assets is vital to a healthy, well-functioning downtown.

One of the greatest challenges for a downtown like Cedar Falls is how to effectively manage employee parking while also ensuring that sufficient parking remains available for customers and bar/restaurant patrons.

While there is a surplus of parking spaces on campus, the core of campus is right next to the College Hill neighborhood. With mostly unregulated and free parking, the College Hill neighborhood becomes an attractive alternative to paid parking on campus.

Stakeholder Interviews/Surveys/Public Workshops:

Everyone interviewed felt that the real problem is restaurant and bar employees parking close in at prime on-street areas, requiring customers to walk farther.

Restaurant owners said they tell employees not to park on-street close to the businesses where they work, but they also admit there is no way to ensure that employees are parking farther out.

None of the owners interviewed were opposed to the concept of paid parking/street meters if paid parking would help to better manage public parking.

Developers made it clear that the City required each of the recent development projects to create on-site parking, but the community doesn't seem to acknowledge this fact.

There was a general consensus that there is not a real "parking problem", just a perception problem.

Cars are parked in city lots for days at a time and not moving.

Most interviewed are in favor of high-density development and a walkable district.

The majority indicated a willingness to walk one to two blocks from their parking spot to their destination.

There was a general acceptance for paid parking by customers, employees, owners and residents.

Parking Study and Recommendations Summary

At the request of Community Main Street businesses, the City completed an outside parking study in February 2019 (\$50,000). During the parking study, the City and parking consultant provided a number of methods to engage downtown stakeholders and the public, including small group round-table discussions, one-on-one interviews, on-line survey and two public workshops, which were well attended.

A parking study was then completed in the College Hill area at a cost of \$45,000. Similar to the Downtown study, interviews, survey and public workshops were conducted for stakeholders and the public.

Recommendations from both studies were approved by the City Council and a Parking Technical Committee was formed between City staff, Community Main Street, College Hill Partnership and UNI to discuss implementation of the recommendations. The Parking Technical Committee met twice a month until the scheduled implementation was to take place in February 2020. All aspects of the recommendations were discussed in detail and agreed upon by all participants. Throughout the parking study and implementation, the City continued regular meetings with all representatives, and followed up with numerous forms of communications, i.e. press releases, social media announcements, informational handouts, etc.

DT Phase 1: The objectives of this phase included new downtown parking choices, FREE 3-hour and FREE overnight parking was added on 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Streets, and FREE 15-minute pick-up/drop-off spaces in every block of the downtown. The City also added more than 31 FREE unrestricted on-street parking spaces throughout the district. In addition to the free parking spaces indicated previously, a partnership was formed with Viking Pump, Inc. to allow public use of their lot after business hours, providing another parking choice to downtown district businesses, customers and employees. This lot is located at the corner of East 4th Street and State Street and provides 69 additional FREE public parking spaces from 5:15pm to 5:00am, Monday through Friday, and all day Saturday and Sunday. These actions added 100 additional FREE parking spaces in the district.

At the request of Community Main Street, additional 15-minute pick up and drop off stalls were added to each of the municipal lots due to an increase in curb-side pickup during the pandemic.

Improved signage: New public parking signs were installed with color-coded sign toppers to assist parkers in identifying the FREE on-street parking time limit choices of 2-hour (purple), 3-hour (gold) and 15-min (red), and coordinating maps were designed, distributed and posted on social media and web site. Public parking lots were renamed and resigned to reflect their actual locations: 2nd Street East, 2nd Street West, 3rd Street East, 3rd Street West and 5th Street West.

The blue public parking lot identification signs make the off-street public parking lots much more visible and easier to locate. (\$15,000)

New parking lot identification signs have been ordered and will be installed in the College Hill public parking lots in the coming months as well. (\$15,000)

Additionally, the city funded \$737,812 for improvements to the 2nd Street East municipal lot, over \$200,000 for the 100 block alley improvements, and continues to invest in the downtown streetscape project.

Phase 2: Included paid off-street public parking lots and new technology. The new technology included a pay station located in each public parking lot (\$50,000) as a choice to pay for as much parking time as guests and shoppers desire at a LOW rate of \$.50/hour. In addition to the pay stations, a mobile payment app was made available as another choice to pay for parking right from your phone, without having to visit the pay station. Prior to implementing the paid parking in the lots, CMS and downtown businesses requested removal of the flat rate fees, which the committee was agreeable to.

Virtual parking permits for the parking lots were developed as a convenient way for users to obtain permits from the web site or from the user's phone. Permits are connected to a license plate, which eliminates the need for paper permits (\$5,000).

New enforcement equipment and software was required for new technology. (\$15,000)

The city has invested a significant amount of time and money to implement most of the recommendations of the parking study, all while working closely with Community Main Street and College Hill Partnership representatives.

Paid parking in the municipal lots was only in place for one full month (October 2020) so it's difficult to determine the effect on businesses. The full impacts of the parking study recommendations will not be known unless the final phase of paid parking in the municipal lots is fully implemented.

ALL ON-STREET PARKING CONTINUES TO BE FREE



***Parking
Presentation
Special City Council Meeting
Dec. 9, 2020***



Background

- February 2019 – Downtown Parking Study was performed (\$48,475)
- September 2019 – College Hill Parking Study was performed (\$44,275)
- Parking Technical Committee was formed between City staff and CMS & CHP to discuss recommendations and implementation
- 10/7/19 City Council approved the contract for Parking Management System



Parking Improvements

- More Parking Choices (free 2, 3, & 24 hour parking, pick up/drop off spaces, overnight parking, etc)
- Evening enforcement & Saturday enforcement have been effective in freeing up prime parking spots on the street
- Improved signage in lots (\$15,000)
- Options for longer term parking in lots



Parking Improvements

- New technology – pay stations, mobile app, virtual parking permits (\$68,000)
- 31 parking spaces added on State Street
- Partnerships created – 69 additional spaces in the evening & weekend time periods



Financial Summary

- Have spent about \$200,000 on studies and implementation
- For FY21 (July-November 2020) the Parking Fund has lost \$54,000 (this does not include the studies and implementation costs – those were in FY19 and FY20)
- Current balance in Parking Fund is \$763,000.
 - So won't take long to use up the balance



Options

- **1.** Continue with paid parking in lots:
- Pros:
 - Following study recommendations
 - Less confusion for paid lot users who have been using the system
 - Solved problems on College Hill with resident parking
 - Long-term parking options available
 - Helps fund parking lot improvements



Options

- **1.** Continue with paid parking in lots:
- Cons:
 - Perceived as a negative impact to business during pandemic



Options

- **2.** Suspend paid parking in lots for a period of time:
- Pros:
 - Businesses past the holiday season
 - Free parking in lots may continue to help to move owners and employees out of prime parking spots on the street
 - Free parking perceived as positive impact to businesses during pandemic



Options

- **2.** Suspend paid parking in lots for a period of time:
- Cons:
 - Confusing when there is paid parking when the suspension is lifted
 - Owners, employees, residents, & employees will consume long term parking spaces
 - Parking lots close to residential complexes will have residents consume lot spaces



Options

- **2.** Suspend paid parking in lots for a period of time:
- Cons - continued:
 - Current permit holders will need to be refunded
 - Loss of parking revenue, however, expenses will remain the same
 - Loss of revenue of at least \$5,000/month
 - Operating expenses \$18,000/month



Options

- **3.** Discontinue paid parking in municipal lots permanently:
- Pros:
 - If paid parking is not tolerated, better to take out equipment now instead of having it sit obsolete during suspended periods
 - No more \$s are spent on implementation (signs, technology, etc)



Options

- **3.** Discontinue paid parking in municipal lots permanently:
- Cons:
 - Loss of parking revenue and enforcement expenses will remain relatively the same, however, some expenses related to the technology may be reduced
 - Parking lot improvements and parking operations will be subsidized by property taxes



Options

- **3.** Discontinue paid parking in municipal lots permanently:
- Cons - continued:
 - Determine need for parking permits
 - Problems solved in College Hill will rise up again
 - Indicates there is not a tolerance for paid parking and therefore should ramp options even be considered at this point?



Staff Recommendation

- Suspend paid parking in lots until March 1, 2021. (Not July 1st as requested by CMS)
- Continue other parking enforcement as outlined in the Code of Ordinances



QUESTIONS?