



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 12, 2015

To: Karl Eberhard, Community Design and Redevelopment Manager
From: Sara Dechter, AICP, Comprehensive Planning Manager

Subject: Regional Plan Analysis of the Proposed Comprehensive
Parking Management Program

The Community Investment staff is proposing a Comprehensive Parking Management Program for the Southside and surrounding residential and commercial areas that has goals of sufficient facilities, appropriate regulations, effective operational systems, necessary equipment and a sustainable independent funding source. The Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 (Regional Plan) calls for a downtown parking strategy in Policy 12.2 and a residential parking permit system in Policy 12.11. The proposed strategy attempts to balance and reconcile the needs of the community in achieving both of these policies.

Origins of parking policies in the Regional Plan: The availability of parking was a frequent topic in the discussions that led up to the Public Hearings for the Regional Plan. In the first public hearing draft only Policy LU.12.2, 12.3 and 12.6, and T.3.4 were included that directly related to parking. Then Vice-Mayor Evans noted the lack of policies related to parking issues impacting the urban residential areas and the item was added to the list of possible changes to be considered as part of the Council retreat about the Regional Plan. Policy LU.12.11 was created at that meeting and made available for public review on December 17, 2013. The policy was part of public comment at the adoption hearing, and the City Council added a phrase about "considering the needs of residents, public events and enterprises in and around the impacted areas" as a result.

Regional Plan Consistency Analysis: The Comprehensive Parking Management Program, as proposed, is consistent with the five main parking

policies of the Regional Plan (LU.12.2, 12.3, 12.6, and 12.11 and T.3.4). It addresses the elements of on and off-street parking, public lots and garages, shared parking lots for employees working downtown, and increases enforcement. Balancing all the needs of the residents, events and businesses in this area is not a task with a “right” answer. There are many ways the goals could be achieved that would be consistent with the regional plan. The task of determining consistency is based on the balance of interests between the general public (who absorbs some of the costs), the residents (who want to maintain their neighborhood character and quality of life), the businesses (that want to grow and provide employment), and the events (that generate tourism and support a vibrant downtown). In addition, the strategy of using public funding to initiate a self-sufficient funding mechanism is in line with the reinvestment goals (LU.1).

On-street parking is a part of Complete Streets design principles (T.1.2) because it creates a transition from the pedestrian environment and the road. It is an essential element of urban commercial districts and neighborhoods (T.1.3). An example of how this works is the parking on the north side of route 66. Without the row of on street parking, the speed and volume of traffic on route 66 would negatively impact the comfort of pedestrians and the foot traffic to businesses along that route. Parking is part of the public right of way that serves multiple community purposes. As a public facility, Goal PF.2 is an important consideration in the strategy’s plan consistency. The phasing of the program and the period of adaptive management is intended to ensure that the system is working towards sustainable and equitable use of public facilities that are efficient and effective. It will also give staff a chance to evaluate how the system is serving all populations equitably. Some of the alternative strategies proposed but not carried forward failed this test of Plan consistency, because they disproportionately favored one interest group over others in allocation of a public resource.

Promoting multimodal transportation is about moving people rather than vehicles. It is about creating a balanced, multimodal, regional transportation system (T.1.1) that makes the best use of existing infrastructure (T.1.7), with convenient transfer from one mode to another (T.1.4), promotes environmental sensibility (T.3), safety (T.2), economic development, and enhances quality of life for all users (T.4). It isn’t about the supply of parking but rather the way that the existing parking supply is managed. Parking is not free, the city or owning entity has to pay for parking to be built, maintained, and managed. One parking space in a parking garage averages \$30,000 – that’s more than the cost of a fully built out bus shelter. A single bus shelter can serve dozens if not hundreds of patrons in a single day and a reserved parking space can only serve one. Allowing one group (be it the general public, residents, businesses, or events) an unlimited use of the public asset while prohibiting other groups from using that same asset does not create an environment that supports multimodal transportation and it creates costs that limit funding for multimodal projects.

Parking is not explicitly addressed as an element of the Neighborhood, Housing and Urban Conservation goals and policies. However, the proposed parking strategy supports the preservation of neighborhood character in that it increases enforcement, which can preserve the character of streets and neighborhoods. One of the problems currently seen in neighborhoods, especially streets without curb, gutter, and sidewalks, is cars parking beyond the right of way in ways that impact pedestrian and bicycle access and damage private property. A residential parking permit program would also allow residents the ability to have exceptions to the 2 hour parking limits. The strategy gives property owners a fair and public process to petition the City for involvement in the program but also the freedom to not participate. This empowers the neighborhood residents and property owners to determine needs in a manner consistent with their values and quality of life in a way that a threshold-based program could not.

In summary, I have found that the proposed Comprehensive Parking Management Program is consistent with the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 goals and policies. It is consistent with or helps to implement policies in the Growth and Land Use, Transportation and Public Facilities chapters and there are no policies with which it conflicts.

Regional Plan Goals and Policies Cited in this Memo

Goal LU.1. Invest in existing neighborhoods and activity centers for the purpose of developing complete, and connected places.

Goal LU.12. Accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and private cars to supplement downtown's status as the best-served and most accessible location in the region.

Policy LU.12.2. Create a downtown parking strategy plan that continues to utilize and improve upon on-street parking, public parking lots and garages, and shared private parking spaces, with clear signage for wayfinding and to inform the public of all parking options.

Policy LU.12.3. Locate public and private parking facilities, lots, and garages carefully, screening parking from streets, squares, and plazas.

Policy LU.12.6. Revise parking regulations to encourage shared parking between various uses within existing structures.

Policy LU.12.11. Develop a residential parking program to address the impacts of on-street parking on public streets in the downtown and surrounding areas, while considering the needs of residents, public events, and enterprises in and around the impacted areas.

Policy T.1.1. Integrate a balanced, multimodal, regional transportation system.

Policy T.1.2. Apply Complete Street Guidelines to accommodate all appropriate modes of travel in transportation improvement projects.

Policy T.1.3. Transportation systems are consistent with the place type and needs of people.

Policy T.1.4. Provide a continuous transportation system with convenient transfer from one mode to another.

Policy T.1.7. Coordinate transportation and other public infrastructure investments efficiently to achieve land use and economic goals.

Goal T.2. Improve transportation safety and efficiency for all modes.

Goal T.3. Provide transportation infrastructure that is conducive to conservation, preservation, and development goals to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts on the natural and built environment.

Policy T.3.4. Actively manage parking, including cost and supply, to support land use, transportation, and economic development goals.

Goal T.4. Promote transportation infrastructure and services that enhance the quality of life of the communities within the region.

Goal PF.2. Provide sustainable and equitable public facilities, services, and infrastructure systems in an efficient and effective manner to serve all population areas and demographics.