

Staff Report

CAMPUSTOWN PLAZA AND PARKING OPTIONS FEEDBACK

May 14, 2019

BACKGROUND:

The City Council has addressed its goal to *Strengthen Downtown & Campustown* with a discussion of visioning for Campustown on July 17, 2018. Subsequent to the workshop, City Council provided direction on design priorities for the Welch 100 block reconstruction, review of options for a plaza, and parking quantity and duration of parking. City Council considered parking and plaza options on December 11, 2018 and directed staff to seek feedback regarding plaza size in relation to closing of Chamberlain Street as well as changes to the timing of parking meters. Attachments A and B are plaza boundary options and current public parking options.

Staff provided direct mail invitation to businesses and property owners for a meeting from 4 p.m. -7 p.m. on March 27th. Staff presented graphics on the current parking conditions and options for changes to meter timing and for construction of parking on Stanton Avenue. Additionally, staff prepared graphics depicting a conceptual layouts for a plaza along 2400 block of Chamberlain Street. The graphics are included as Attachment C to this report. Staff solicited written feedback on these various issues. Staff estimates 15 people attended, and a summary of the comments are included as Attachment D. In effort to seek expanded public input, staff held a pop-up display at Campustown Court from 12p.m.- 2p.m. on Friday April 26th. Staff received 10-15 additional comments that are included in Attachment E.

PLAZA DESIGN OPTIONS:

The December 11th Staff Report provided outlines of plaza dimensions for placing a plaza in the location of Lot Y and potentially changing the configuration of Chamberlain Street. Ideally, an urban plaza would be a destination for pedestrians with active and engaging uses in or abutting the plaza to create interest and energy with its use. The plaza options ranged in size from approximately 6,800 square feet with no changes to the street and up to 16,000 square feet with full closure of Chamberlain Street. Contextually, the Tom Evans Plaza in Downtown Ames is rectangular as well and approximately 9,000 square feet.

As discussed in December, placing a plaza along Chamberlain and Lot Y will remove between 9 and 19 public parking spaces. The closure of the road is not anticipated to have negative impacts on circulation for automobiles, but it would likely need to allow for a fire truck to travel through the space on an infrequent basis.

Participants in the workshop generally expressed support for an expanded plaza area, while some concerns were expressed regarding how the space will be used and its appearance/maintenance. **In general, the feedback indicated a preference for closing the 2400 block of Chamberlain Avenue for a larger plaza compared to the smaller**

options that allowed for a two-way street to remain. There were a few comments that preferred no plaza in order to maintain parking. Some of the specific ideas expressed in the written comments included:

1. "Please invest in Campustown. The City can help the narrative of Campustown through private, public investment."
2. "I like the idea of having an open space for people to sit and having fire truck access is not too much of a burden. The population of students would enjoy having more space to sit."
3. "...Uncertain about how clean it will stay. Who will maintain the space..."
4. "Students trash property and riots were a problem in the past. In Iowa, a plaza would be used occasionally, but businesses are used 12 months..."
5. "Hardscaping would allow for better utilization of the space...Would love it to work as a music space, gathering, vendor space, etc"

The majority of the feedback from the pop up event also preferred the closure of the 2400 block of Chamberlain Avenue for the plaza space. However, no direct comments were left regarding the space itself.

PARKING MANAGEMENT:

Parking Timing

Currently, there are a mix of parking meter times between 2 and 10 hours and monthly reserved parking spaces within Campustown. There are approximately 118 off-street parking spaces in the City-managed lots and 209 on-street parking spaces. There currently are 40 public parking meter spaces within the Intermodal Facility. The following table describes the quantity of spaces by maximum time for parking.

Campustown Public Parking Summary- December 1, 2018*

Type	Quantity
2 HR-Meter	62
4 HR-Meter	138
10 HR-Meter	83
ADA-Free	10
Reserved Permit-Monthly	31
15 Minute-Free	3
Intermodal Facility- Meter	40
TOTAL PARKING	367 (327 City managed)

**Accounts for current Welch Avenue pilot project configuration, which reduced Welch 100 and 200 block parking by a total of 14 spaces in 2016.*

The past five years have seen a significant amount of change with redevelopment and City projects in the Campustown district. **Campustown does not require private development to provide commercial parking, only to provide one parking space per apartment dwelling.** Almost all new parking built in the past five years serves residential uses rather than commercial uses. This is a significant difference for the area as most of the recent

residential redevelopment replaced low scale commercial sites that had on-site commercial parking.

Supporting the vision of the area as a community commercial destination as described in the Land Use Policy Plan, rather than a neighborhood district, places more importance on public parking opportunities than previous conditions when more private parking was available. Staff believes creating the right mix of parking options and pedestrian enhancements are both critical to the vitality and diversity of the commercial businesses in the area.

Short Term vs. Long Term Parking

Staff generated (See page 5 of Attachment D) a parking meter timing proposal for the March 27th workshop. The proposal included 2-hour parking within Lot X in place of 10-hour parking and replacing 10- hour parking in Lot Y with 4-hour parking. The proposal also included changing on-street parking on the 2400 and 2500 block of Chamberlain Avenue from 4-hour to 2-hour. All other off-street parking lot and on-street spaces would remain as currently configured.

The feedback from both the open house in March and pop-up meeting indicated a preference for shorter duration parking near the 100 and 200 blocks of Welch Avenue. However, shorter duration meant two different things to the two groups. Feedback from the open house indicated a preference for 2-hour parking. The attendees at this event trended towards daytime business owners and users. The feedback from the pop-up favored the 4-hour parking option, however, there was no specific reasons offered for this position.

Parking Supply

If City Council is concerned about the erosion of total number of parking spaces in the area, there are some options that could be explored to increase the number of spaces available for public parking.

Option 1. The first option is to bring 6 parking spaces back to the 200 block of Welch. The desire at this time is to end the Pilot Project in this area and return to metered parking.

Option 2. The second option is to widen the 100 block of Stanton and create additional parking along the east side of the street. The area could support between 10-20 parking spaces with widening of the road.

Based upon Stanton's current condition, it is likely that it will need to be redone in the future. However, the 100 block of Stanton is not currently in the CIP for road work. At the time of considering improvements to the 100 Block of Stanton it would be prudent to include parking as a result of displaced parking with the construction of a plaza.

Option 3. Increase the number of hourly spaces in the Inter-modal facility.

With the proposed changes to the timing of stalls to reduce the number of ten hour timed spaces, this action would support more users within the Inter-modal facility for long-term parking needs. However, there does not currently appear to be a need for adding spaces at this time. This issued can be revisited at any time in the future when the need arises.

STAFF COMMENTS:

City Council is being asked at this time to provide direction on whether to pursue projects for a plaza design, parking timing, or parking quantity as well as whether the public outreach for the parking changes was adequate to allow for changes to occur this summer before the start of the next school year.

Parking Timing

Staff is recommending that the City Council direct staff to implement the changes proposed to reduce the number of 10-hour parking within Campustown City parking lots to create greater turnover of spaces for the convenience of visitors and customers to the business district. This recommendation also includes changing to 2 hours parking limits in Lot X and the 2400 and 2500 block of Chamberlain. Finally, Lot Y would become 4-hour parking until the area is used for a plaza.

The City Council could alternatively choose to leave the spaces as currently timed and wait for the Welch Avenue project to be completed before making any other changes. With City Council's decision on this issue of timing, the staff will move forward on implementing additional signage to identify public parking areas within Campustown.

Plaza Design

At this time City Council could choose to focus on a specific size of plaza and move forward with a RFP to hire a design firm to create detailed concepts for the space. Based upon the public input and graphics created by staff, it appears the larger plaza option that closed Chamberlain to through traffic would be the preferred option. However, due to uncertainty of the use of the plaza and the affect the fire station's current location would have on the layout of the plaza the concept, this design issue could be tabled until there is clarity on the issue of Fire Station #2 and its continued operation at the current site.

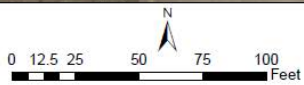
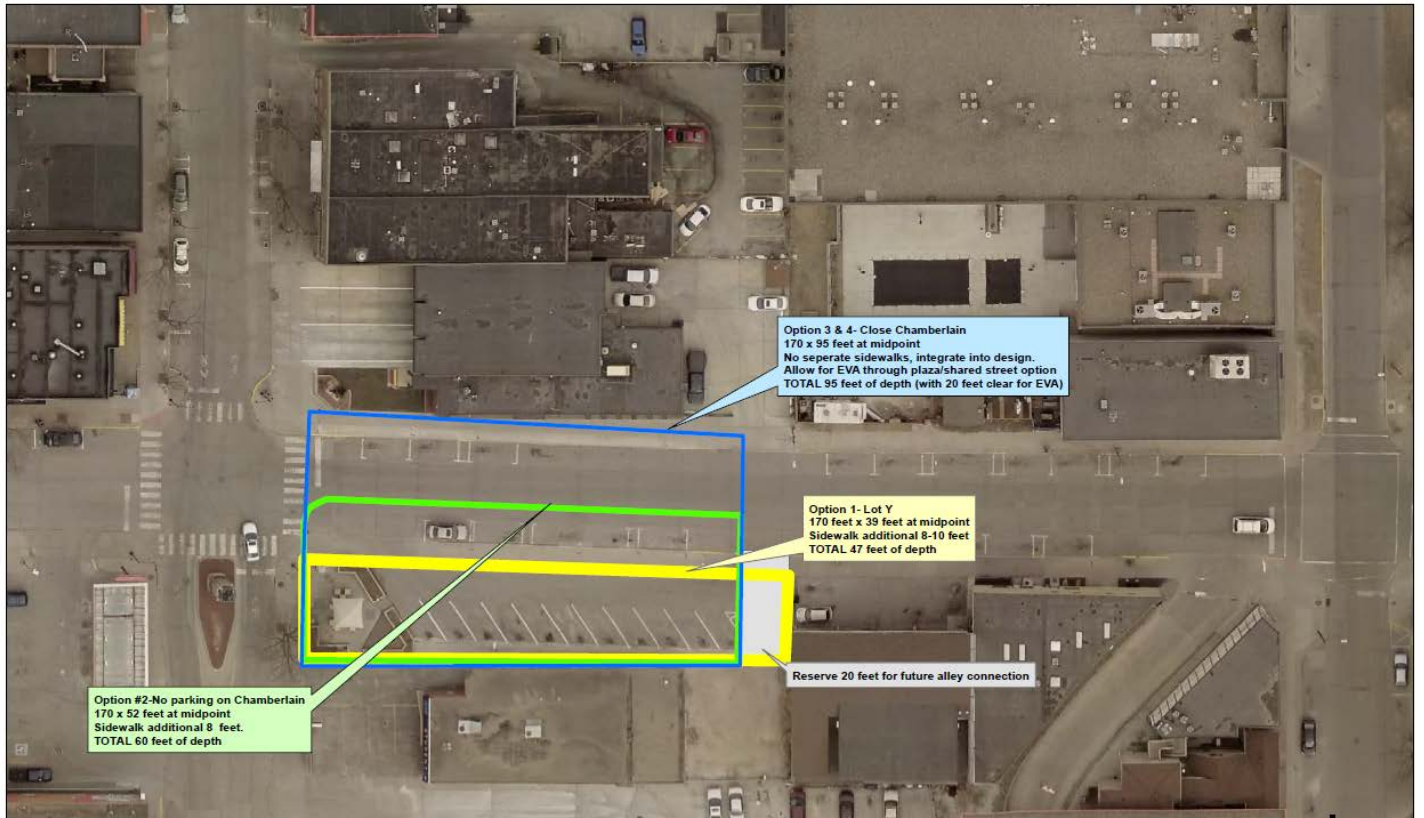
If City Council moves forward with a plaza option, staff would create an interdisciplinary team with Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works to work with a consultant to develop a plaza design. Staff could prepare a RFQ to identify qualified consultants for the project this summer. If a consultant is hired later this summer, concept work and public outreach would likely occur in the fall and winter. Pursuing a preliminary design would likely cost between \$25,000 and \$50,000 depending on the scope of work, number of meetings, and outreach efforts. The City Council will remember that the FY 2018/19 budget included \$400,000 for the construction of a plaza in either Campustown or Downtown.

Parking Quantity

Removing the pilot project planters on the 200 block of Welch would be desirable for the area to create six additional parking spaces. The planters have not been planted this spring due the likelihood that they would be removed. With City Council's concurrence, the planters in the 200 block would be replaced with metered parking by Public Works staff as soon as possible. Alternatively, the City could take on landscaping and maintain the planters through this summer as has been discussed for the 100 block of Welch.

Constructing additional parking along Stanton Avenue appears to be an appropriate treatment for the street. However, to add parking would require widening of the road. A project to add parking is in the order of magnitude of \$400,000. Staff believes that adding parking would be most appropriate in concert with a CIP project to reconstruct Stanton Ave. In the meantime, additional hourly parking spaces can be created in the Inter-modal facility.

Attachment A



Plaza Dimension Options

Attachment B-Parking Inventory Map

[The City's Parking Map is available online at this link.](#)



Attachment C - Graphics Representing Plaza and Parking Options

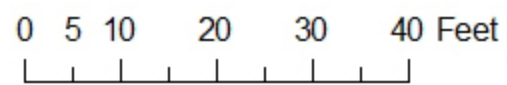
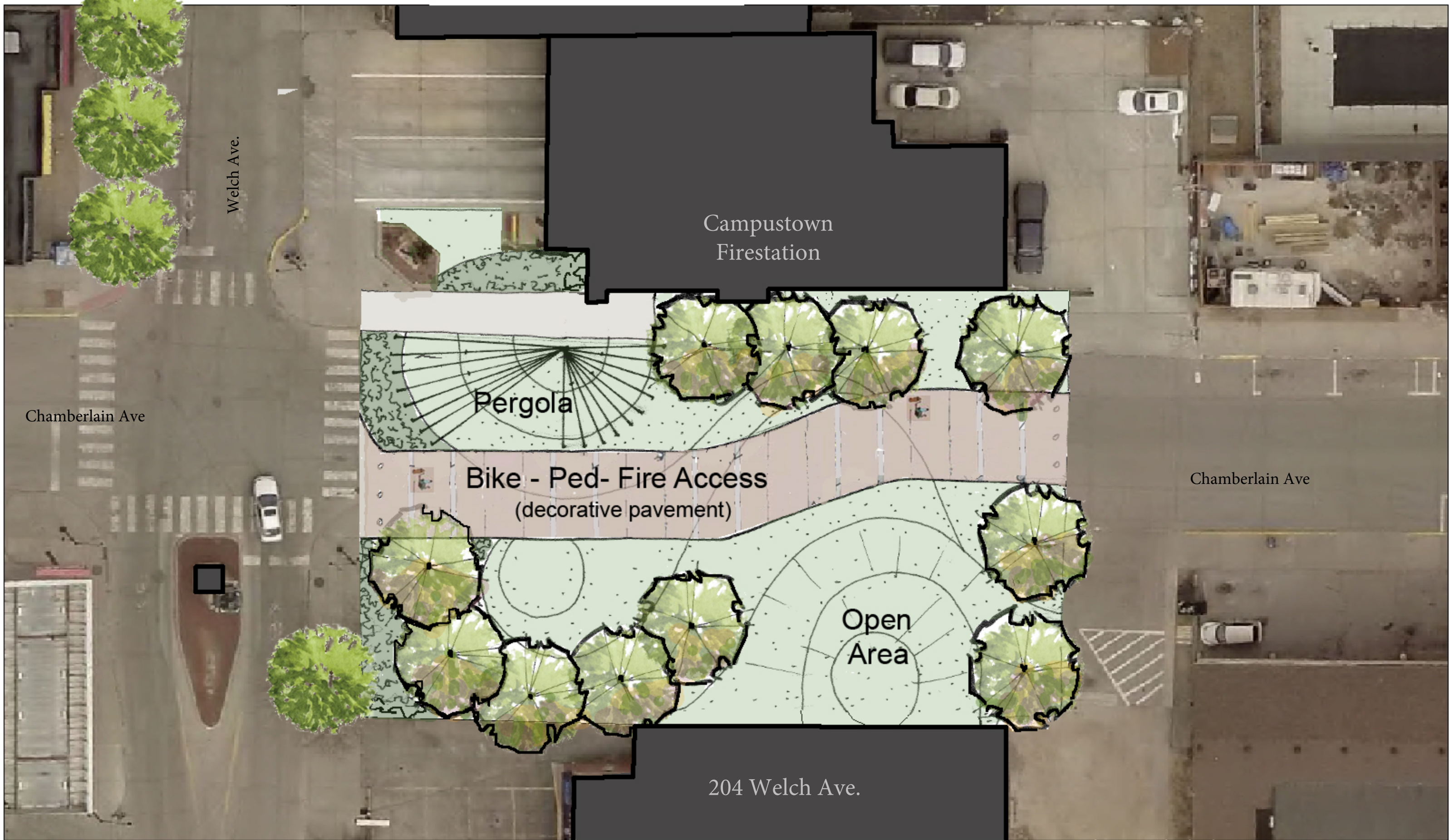


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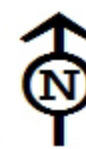
The Plaza @ Campustown

This design is intended to represent one possible concept. It is intended for discussion purposes only.

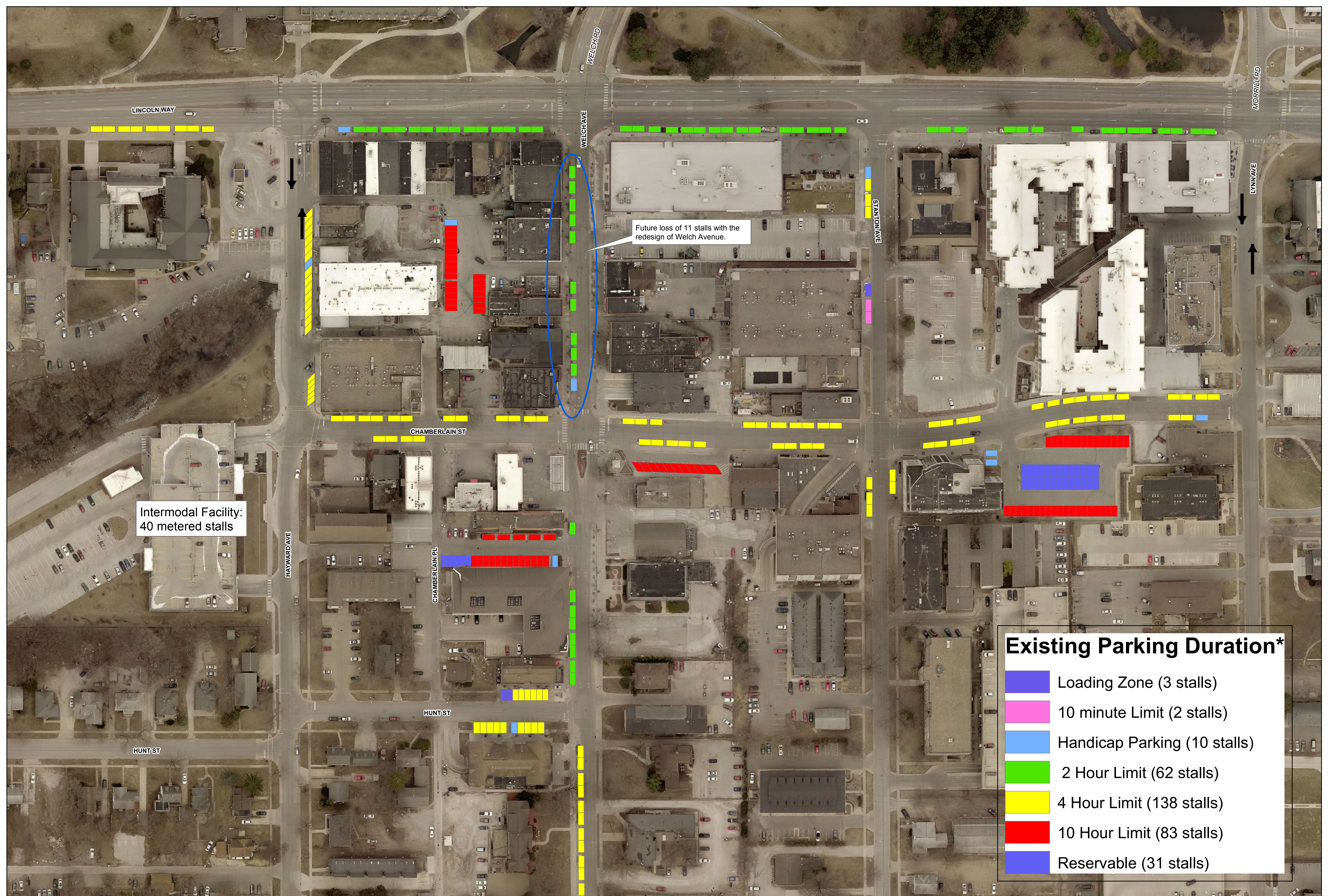




The Plaza @ Campustown



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Intermodal Facility:
40 metered stalls

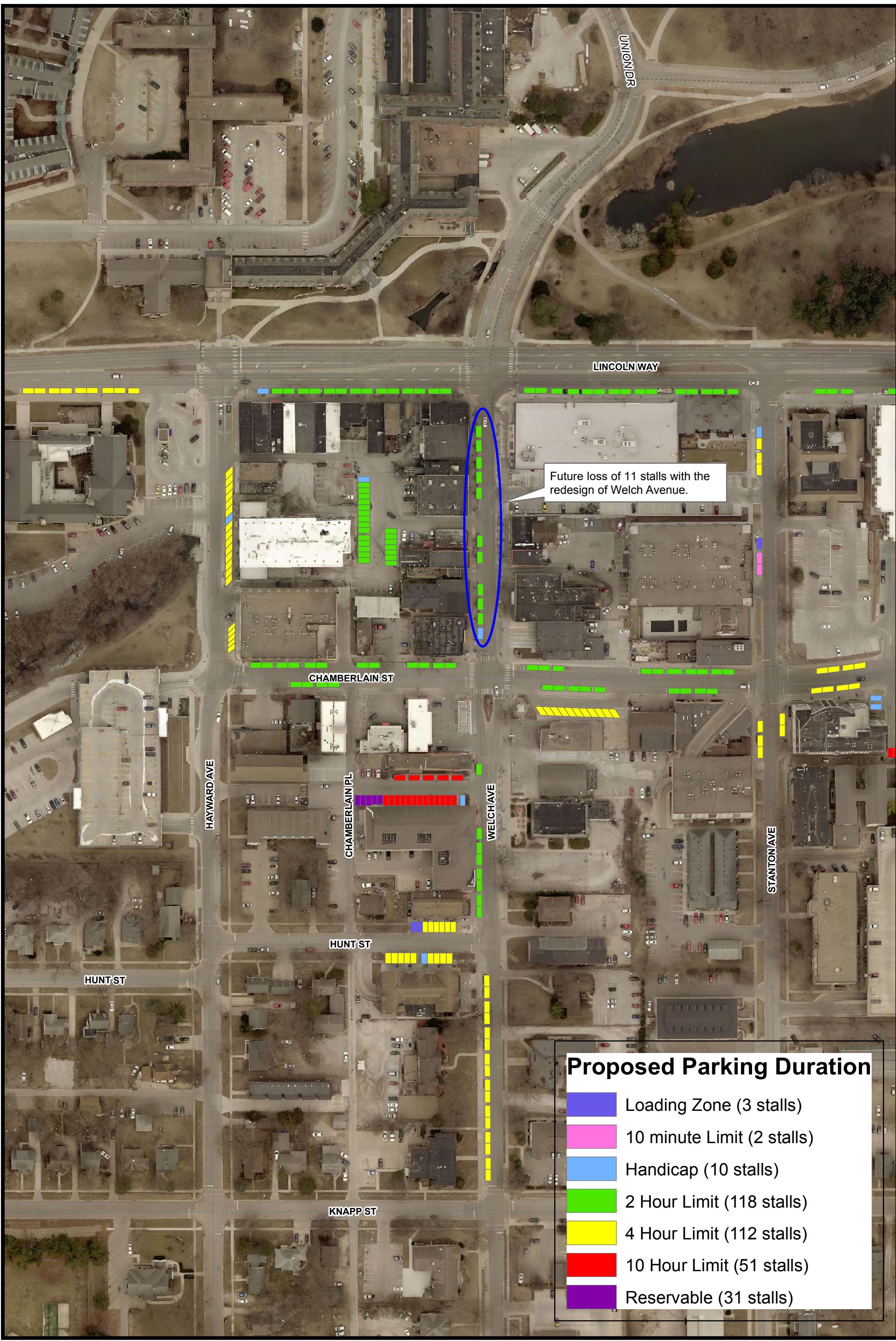
Future loss of 11 stalls with the
redesign of Welch Avenue.

Existing Parking Duration*

- Loading Zone (3 stalls)
- 10 minute Limit (2 stalls)
- Handicap Parking (10 stalls)
- 2 Hour Limit (62 stalls)
- 4 Hour Limit (138 stalls)
- 10 Hour Limit (83 stalls)
- Reservable (31 stalls)



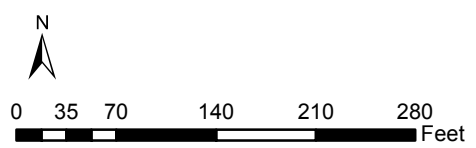
* Some parking stalls are located off map.



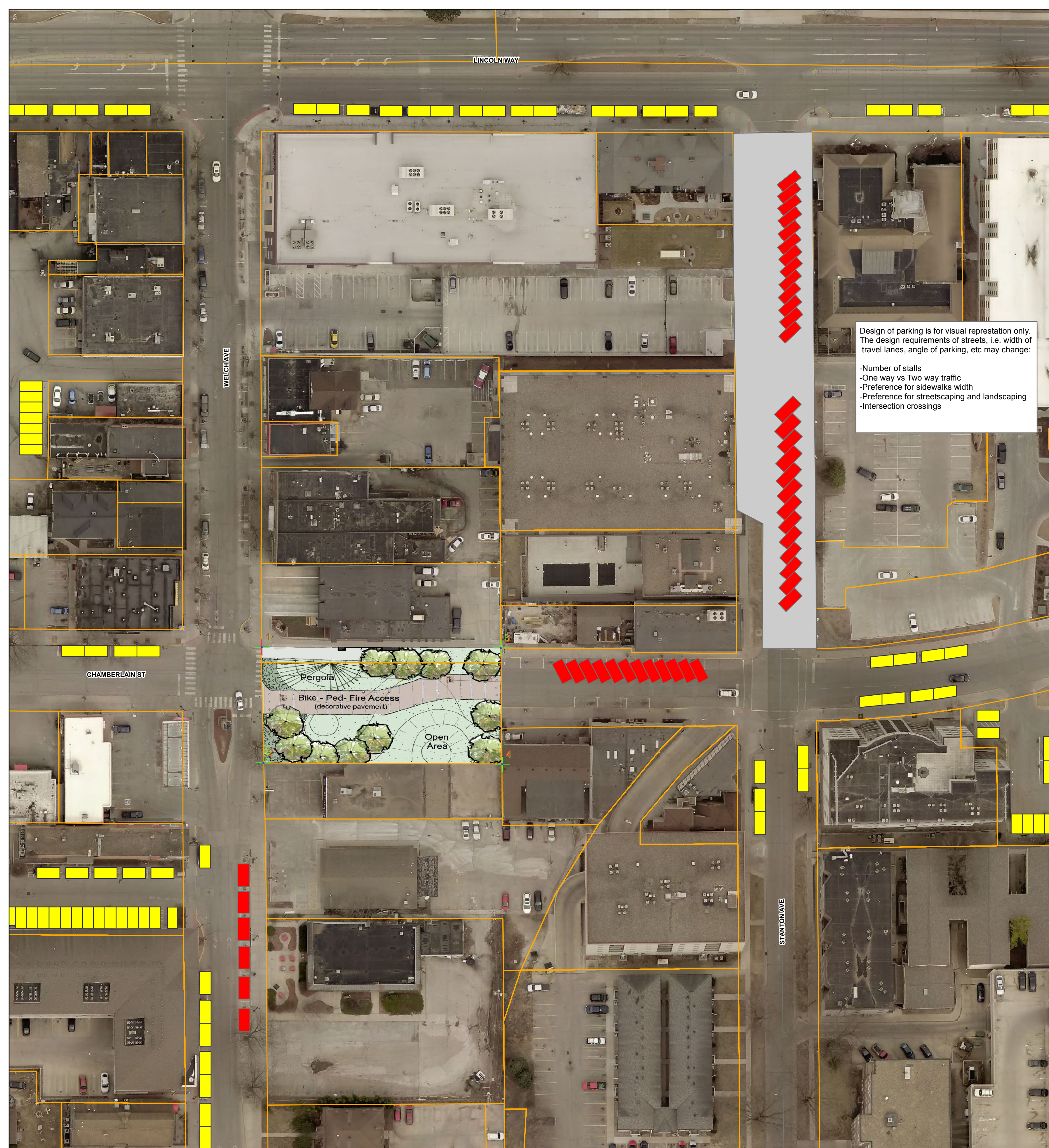
Future loss of 11 stalls with the redesign of Welch Avenue.

Proposed Parking Duration

- Loading Zone (3 stalls)
- 10 minute Limit (2 stalls)
- Handicap (10 stalls)
- 2 Hour Limit (118 stalls)
- 4 Hour Limit (112 stalls)
- 10 Hour Limit (51 stalls)
- Reservable (31 stalls)

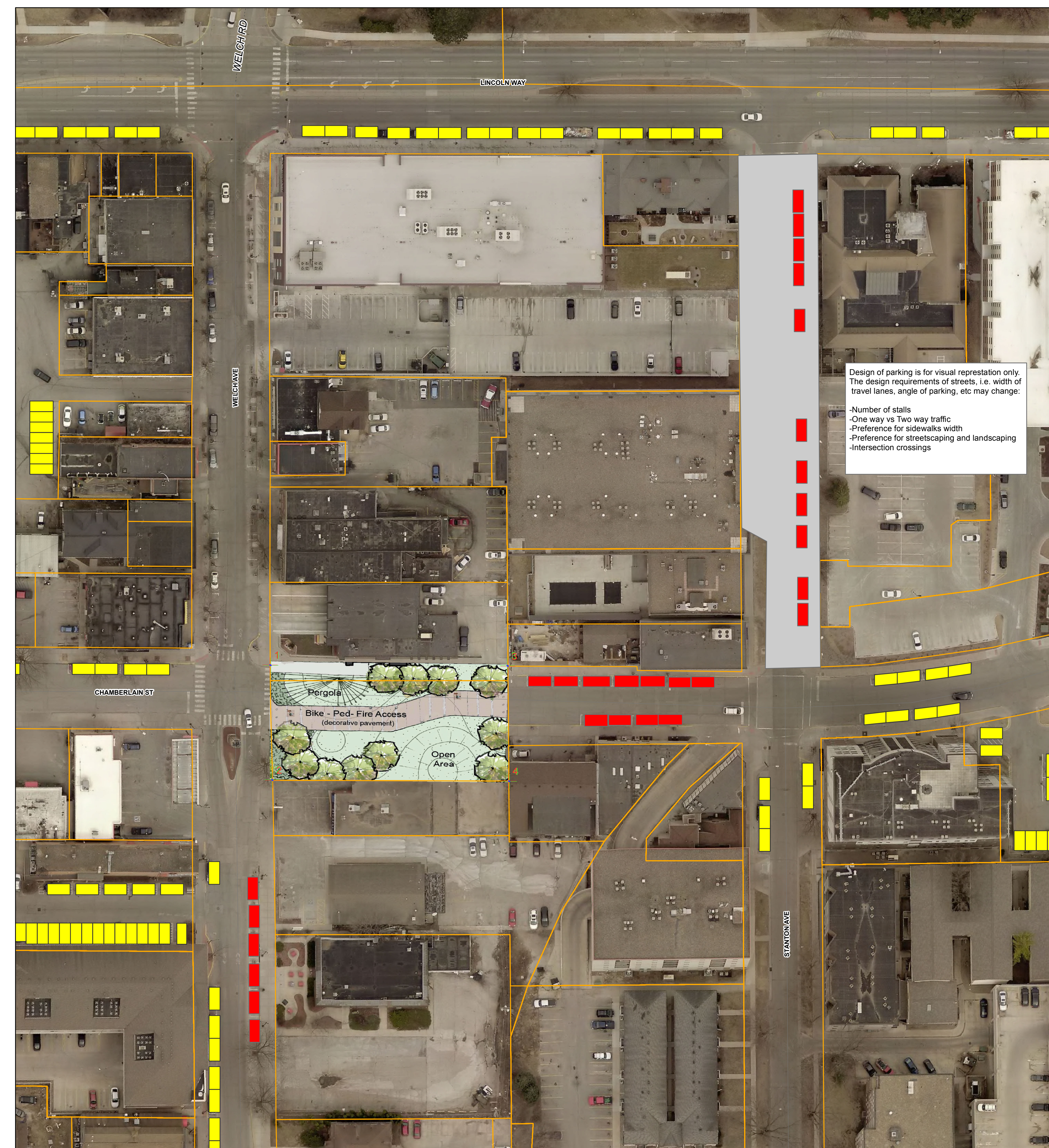


*Some parking stalls are located off map and no changes are proposed.



Design of parking is for visual representation only. The design requirements of streets, i.e. width of travel lanes, angle of parking, etc may change:

- Number of stalls
- One way vs Two way traffic
- Preference for sidewalks width
- Preference for streetscaping and landscaping
- Intersection crossings

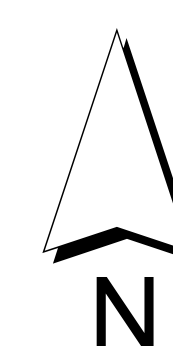
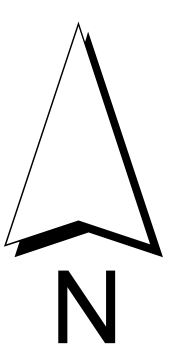


Design of parking is for visual representation only. The design requirements of streets, i.e. width of travel lanes, angle of parking, etc may change:

- Number of stalls
- One way vs Two way traffic
- Preference for sidewalks width
- Preference for streetscaping and landscaping
- Intersection crossings

Option 1: Angled parking with plaza
365 stalls including spaces available at the Intermodal Facility

Option 2: Parallel Parking with Plaza
355 stalls including spaces available at the Intermodal Facility



Attachment D: Feedback from Open House

Parking Duration and Location Summary

Have you visited Campustown in the last month: 15 yes, 0 no

How many times: 3 people - 5 times; 1 person - 8 times; 1 person - 20 times; 1 person - 20-28 times; 2 people - 25-30 times; 1 person - 30 times; 1 person - many; 3 people – daily.

Purpose of Visit to Campustown in the last month: 11 work; 3 entertainment, 1 other

Should there be shorter duration parking near the 100 & 200 blocks of Welch Avenue?

2 hour – 10

4 hour – 5

10 hour – 0

Other – 0

Should the timing of parking meters and their location remain in the present configuration?

Yes - 2

? - 4

No – 4

Comments:

1. More uniformity , all meters at 2 hours is fine especially with mobile app.
2. We have a business on the 100 block of Welch. With the removal of additional spaces we may have to close.
3. I like the shorter duration for better customer turnover and fewer longer term students parking and going to class.
4. Timing would be better with shorter durations for businesses in the area. At night it would be beneficial to lengthen times to prevent drunk driving.
5. Creating longer parking durations will attract more people and create better opportunities for travel.
6. This area didn't really get concerned with timing of meters . Employees would walk from free parking to store.

Parking Space Design Summary

Do you prefer parallel parking spaces or angled parking spaces?

Parallel – 0, plus 2 addl. want it only on Chamberlain

Angled – 10, plus 2 addl. want it only on Stanton Ave.

Would adding approximately 11 short-term parking parallel stalls on the 100 block of Stanton be beneficial to visitors in the district:

Yes – 11

? – 1

No – 1

Would widening the 100 block of Stanton and adding approximately 20 short-term angled parking on the east side of Stanton with no parallel spaces on the west side be beneficial to visitors of the district?

Yes – 11

? – 1

No – 1

Comments:

1. Nice possible green space here. Area between sidewalk and street is nice and wide. Sidewalk too narrow for traffic. Curb too low to prevent damage to the grass.
2. We need to replace the spaces lost in the 100 block.
3. I think lessening the number of parallel spots would be safer. People are terrible at parking.
4. Improving remote student parking, creating a good long term lot to allow changing current apartment parking to commercial would help as well.
5. Giving more spots that have shorter times would be great for businesses.
6. Parallel on Chamberlain and angled on Stanton (reflected in summary above)
7. Angled parking will create more parking spaces for people
8. The additional parking options won't benefit us. We have aging clients that aren't physically able to walk 2-3 blocks.

Plaza Design Options

Would adding an open space/plaza to Campustown along the 2400 block of Chamberlain would be beneficial to the district?

Agree – 10

Disagree – 3

Unsure/? – 1

Is closure of the 2400 block of Chamberlain desirable to expand the size of the plaza?

Agree – 8

Disagree – 4

Unsure/? – 1

The design of the plaza should emphasize:

Landscaped space for leisure and aesthetics or the plaza design – 3 + 1 marked both

Hardscaped spaced with landscaped accents to increase usability and versatility throughout the year – 7 + 1 marked both

If the Chamberlain location does not meet the interests and goals for a plaza, why?

Do not want to have a street closed for a plaza – 2

The size is not large enough – 2

The loss of parking spaces is not desirable for the current design options – 4

The limitations on design, by allowing for occasional fire truck passage through the area is undesirable – 1

Uncertain about how often the plaza would be used – 4

Uncertain about the attractiveness of a plaza – 2

Uncertain about redevelopment of other properties in the area and the effects a plaza design – 1

Other – 1

Comments:

1. Please invest in Campustown. The City can help the narrative of Campustown through private/public investment.
2. Campustown public spaces are not well maintained, very trashy. Need surveillance cameras in any new plaza for future Veisha riots. First step is to clean up what exists.
3. Squeezing a “plaza” Chamberlain is another band aid fix to this area.
4. Students trash property and riots were a problem in the past. In Iowa it would be used occasionally but businesses are used 12 months.
5. Hardscaping would allow for better utilization of the space. Maybe use murals or painting for picture art. Would love it to work as music space, gathering, vendor space, etc.
6. Hardscaping will survive foot traffic, landscaping may not.
7. While I am for the plaza, my only concern is it enough space to attract a large number of people.

8. I like the idea for having an open space for people to sit and having fire truck access is not too much of a burden. The population of students would enjoy having more space to sit.
9. Uncertain about how clean it will stay. Who will maintain the space? CAA struggles to keep groups signed up for Make Campustown Shine. Stanton Avenue needs to be redesigned for my opinion to change.
10. I am not in favor of closing the parking lot on Chamberlain and taking more parking away from businesses. The additional parking is too far from our business on Welch and wouldn't benefit us. I know the Ames police are not in favor of a "gathering space". Too many possibilities for students to gather for unfavorable things.

Additional Comments:

1. Should have analysis of parking spaces compared with commercial space. How does it compare with new commercial requirements? Should plan to lose spaces on Lincoln Way west of Stanton for unsafe crosswalk to meet MUTED standards, 2 or 3 spaces. Eastbound cars do not see pedestrians, need enforcement of pedestrian right-of-way in pedestrian crosswalk.
2. Are the police in favor? What is to be done for the removal of the handicapped space on Welch? Already we have lost parking on both sides of Welch & business can't survive with the loss of additional parking.
3. Looks great!

Attachment E: Feedback from Campustown Court Pop-up

Parking Duration and Location Summary

Have you visited Campustown in the last month: 12 yes, 0 indicated no

How many times: 3 people 30 times; 1 person 16 times; 1 person 15 times; 1 person 14 times; 2 people 12 times; 2 people 10 times, 1 person 5 times; 1 person 3 times

Purpose of Visit to Campustown in the last month: 3 work; 5 entertainment; 5 other

Should there be more, shorter duration parking near the 100 & 200 blocks of Welch Avenue?

2 hour – 4

4 hour – 8

10 hour – 1

Other – 0

Should the timing of parking meters and their location remain in the present configuration:

Yes – 0

? – 4

No – 4

Comments:

1. Usually I park a block or two off from Welch in the free parking along the street to avoid dealing with meters.
2. Day time short-term, evenings long-term.
3. I don't own a vehicle but I think people who want to find more parking aren't smart about it.

Parking Space Design Summary

Do you prefer parallel parking spaces or angled parking space?

Parallel – 5

Angled – 7

Would adding approximately 11 short-term parking parallel stalls on the 100 Block of Stanton be beneficial to visitors of the district?

Yes – 9

? - 1

No – 2

Would widening the 100 Block of Stanton and adding approximately 20 short-term angled parking on the east side of Stanton with no parallel spaces on the west side be beneficial to visitors of the district?

Yes – 8

? - 2

No -1

Comments:

1. I think parallel parking is efficient in street width but whatever yields the most parking spaces should be picked.

Plaza Design Options

Would adding an open space/plaza to Campustown along the 2400 Block of Chamberlain be beneficial to the district?

Agree – 8

Disagree – 0

Is closure of the 2400 Block of Chamberlain desirable to expand the size of the plaza?

Agree – 7

Disagree – 1

The design of the plaza should emphasize:

Landscaped space for leisure and aesthetics or the plaza design – 2

Hardscaped spaced with landscaped accents to increase usability and versatility throughout the year – 5 + 1 marked both

If the Chamberlain location does not meet the interests and goals for a plaza, why?

Do you want to have a street closed for a plaza – 1

The size is not large enough – 1

The loss of parking spaces is not desirable for the current design options – 0

The limitations on design, by allowing for occasional fire truck passage through the area is undesirable – 1

Uncertain about how often the plaza would be used – 2

Uncertain about the attractiveness of a plaza – 0

Uncertain about redevelopment of other properties in the area and the effects a plaza design – 2

Other – 0

Comments: None

Additional Comments: None