**ITEM #_22__**

Staff Report

# CAMPUSTOWN PLAZA AND PARKING OPTIONS

December 11, 2018

## BACKGROUND:

The City Council held a Campustown Visioning Workshop on July 17th. The workshop was intended to address the City Council Goal: *To Strengthen Downtown & Campustown* with a discussion of issues regarding the history of past Campustown projects and studies, policies for development standards, URA incentives, creation of a new plaza, and initiating the design of the reconstruction of the 100 block of Welch Avenue. At the conclusion of the meeting, City Council requested follow up information regarding relocating the fire station, locating a plaza at the SE corner of Chamberlain and Welch with potentially closing Chamberlain to expand the size of a plaza, and, thirdly, options for Welch Avenue street sections public input on the design options for Welch.

Subsequent to the workshop, City Council reviewed Welch Avenue street design options in August, staff conducted outreach in August and September regarding Welch Avenue, and Council reviewed the findings on October 9th. City Council gave direction to the Public Works Department on October 9th to proceed with a 100 Block Welch Avenue design with two-way traffic and bike lanes, thereby removing parking on the block. Additionally, City Council discussed the effects on parking quantity and timing of meters and directed staff to prepare signage to assist in directing the public to available parking.

**This report addresses the issue of locating a new plaza on Chamberlain Street and the potential effect on traffic circulation and parking within the Campustown area with the incorporation of the recent direction on Welch Avenue design.**

## PLAZA DESIGN OPTIONS:

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 Campus and Community Commission recommended the City Council consider locating a plaza on City controlled land known as Parking Lot Y at the SE corner of Welch Avenue and Chamberlain Street. A street view picture of Lot Y is included as Attachment A. Currently, Campustown Court is located at this intersection as a micro-plaza of approximately 1,000 square feet with seating and a small raised platform. This corner location was recommended as appropriate due to City control of the land, visibility, and its central location. **The design and programming of the plaza space would be a second step if there is a decision regarding the location and footprint of the facility.**

The Lot Y size was also considered in the context of Tom Evans Plaza along Main Street as a comparable local example. Tom Evans Plaza is approximately 80 feet wide and 100 to 120 feet in length (approximately 9,000 square feet). The configuration of Lot Y with a plaza

results in options ranging from half the size of Tom Evans to one that is substantially larger than Tom Evans Plaza. Staff has prepared Attachment B to illustrate four dimensional choices for the size of the plaza at the SE corner of Welch and Chamberlain.

Option 1- Parking Lot Y Only

Parking lot Y with Campustown Court is a slightly irregular rectangular shaped site that is approximately 190 feet in length and 39 feet in width at its midpoint. Future redevelopment of the site would require reserving 20 feet for an alley to the south, thereby by making the plaza length 170 feet. The total area is approximately 6,800 square feet and bordered by eight-foot public sidewalks. Removing Parking Lot Y would remove 11 metered parking spaces, but allow for one or two additional on street spaces with the removal of the driveway resulting in a net loss of 9 to 10 parking spaces. There would be no changes to the street, other than removing the current driveway to Lot Y.

Option 2- Parking Lot Y and Remove Parking Along Chamberlain

This option would include the area of Option 1 and eliminate approximately eight on -street metered parking spaces and a truck-loading zone to allow for a greater plaza width by reducing the size of the street. The street would be reduced in width to 26 feet and allow for two-way traffic. The net loss of parking spaces would be 19 spaces. The width of the plaza area would be increased by approximately 13 feet. The area for the plaza would be approximately 8,800 square feet. The design would also include eight-foot sidewalks along the perimeter.

Option 3- Closure of Chamberlain

City Council requested the City's traffic engineer analyze the effects of one-way circulation or full closure of Chamberlain on traffic patterns for Campustown. Data was collected to identify average peak hour traffic for the area and a micro-simulation model was created to analyze the impacts. There are in aggregate about 100 westbound vehicles and 80 east bound vehicle trips in the 2400 Block of Chamberlain during the peak hour. Closure of the street would occur at the midpoint of the block. **The traffic engineer determined that although closing the street would deviate from our block length standards of the Subdivision Code, there would be no significant operational deficiencies to other intersections from either making Chamberlain one way or closing it to all vehicular traffic.** Attachment C includes traffic counts for existing conditions and modeled street closure of Chamberlain.

Staff assumed that an emergency vehicle access (EVA) route would be maintained through the plaza to meet any access needs for the Fire Department with a street closure. An EVA route would not allow for any non-emergency traffic and include a physical impediment, such as a bollard, to deter non-emergency vehicles. Provisions for turning around vehicles would be needed at the eastern end of the Plaza because it will be a dead-end street. (There is not room to construct a cul-de-sac) Use of the alley approach to the south as a 3 point turn would potentially work for the turnaround. This would create some minor Public Works operational concerns for maintenance/snow removal activities compared to maintaining a through street.

The option to fully close chamberlain creates substantially more plaza area than a one-way

street. A one-way street would likely be required to be 20 feet wide to meet fire access road requirements which is only six feet less than a standard two-way road. Full closure allows for all 26 feet of the roadway and the combined 16 feet of sidewalks on both sides of the street to be used for a plaza. The full closure option would result in a 95-foot wide plaza that is 170 feet long for a total area of approximately 16,000 square feet. The 16,000 square feet is inclusive of sidewalk area and the EVA route.

Option 4- Plaza and Shared Street Design

The recently adopted Complete Streets Manual identifies an additional option to consider for Chamberlain. Chamberlain could be integrated into the design of the plaza as a Shared Street, also known as a Woonerf. Option 4 would use the area of Option 3 and rely upon the design of the plaza to embrace the design of the space for pedestrians and amenities but allow for very low speed travel through the plaza by all vehicle types at the same grade level as the plaza grounds. This option would impact the overall usability of the space by maintaining a travel way for everyday use, but it may create a larger visual impact for the plaza compared to a segregated street and plaza design. Use of the shared street concept for a plaza component would be a unique choice as shared streets are typically designed for the mixing of pedestrians, bicyclists, and cars for transportation purposes rather than mixing for leisure and transportation purposes as would be the case with a Campustown plaza.

## PARKING MANAGEMENT:

**Based upon the City's recent decisions concerning changes to parking quantity and timing of meters, the potential additional changes to parking with the construction of a plaza require consideration of the overall parking program for Campustown.** Currently, there are a mix of parking meter times between 2 and 10 hours and monthly reserved parking spaces within Campustown. Parking rates are $1.00/hr for 2-hr parking, $0.75 for 4-hr parking, and $0.50 per hour for 10-hr parking. 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. Attachment D is a map indicating the location of the stalls by maximum parking time.

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 parking impacts from the plaza options described above range from a net loss of 10 to 19 spaces. The 100 Block Welch Avenue reconstruction will result in an additional reduction of 11 parking spaces from the totals in the above table. City**

**Council has not provided direction on whether the 200 Block of Welch would continue to have parklets or restore the six parking spaces that existed previously. There are no other planned changes to parking spaces at this time.**

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.**

## PARKING OPTIONS:

Option 1 - Short Term vs Long Term Parking

**Staff recommends addressing the reduction in the quantity and location of short term parking with a first step of changing the location of long term vs. short term parking regardless of a decision on a Lot Y plaza.** Locating short term 2-hr and some 4-hr parking within the closest proximity to commercial businesses should be a priority over long term parking when considering convenience for customers visiting Campustown. Staff recommends changing the timing of parking meters within Lot X to 2-hr parking and Lot Y area to 2-hr and 4-hr parking rather than 10-hr parking. Long term 10-hr parking could be retained within Lot Z and Lot T to meet employee and other needs for the area. The Intermodal Facility parking meters should also allow for long term parking as needed.

This approach would be more attractive to visitors with the most conveniently located parking within the center of the area, while long term parking is located at the perimeter of the area. Reserved monthly parking would still be restricted to perimeter parking areas. With a set expectation on parking types and location, parking wayfinding signage could then be appropriately planned and marketed for the area.

Option 2 - Increase Parking Supply

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

Increasing on-street parking spaces would require changes from parallel to angled parking. Angled parking currently exists along Hayward Avenue with parallel parking along the other streets in Campustown. In circumstances with a 40-foot street width and minimal driveway interruptions, angled parking is the most efficient parking pattern. The tradeoff with angled

parking is that is considered somewhat less safe for bicyclist/vehicle interactions when backing out of a space and it places all the parking on one side of a street versus both sides of the street.

Changing from parallel to angled parking would create a handful of more spaces on each street compared to parallel. For example, the 2400 Block of Chamberlain with the full street closure option for a plaza could be restriped to angled parking on the north side of the street and removing parking on the south side for a net gain of approximately two parking spaces for the block. This requires removing and replacing striping and resetting parking meters.

The 100 block of Stanton is unique for Campustown by having parking on only one side of the street due to its width. Stanton has under landscaped planter strips lining the street. The City could do much needed streetscape work along Stanton and consider widening Stanton with parallel parking bays or creating angled parking. Improvements to Stanton could add between 10 and 20 new parking spaces with widening construction. This option would require a Capital Improvements Program project due to its scope.

The Intermodal Facility is jointly managed between the City and ISU. The current system of reserved and metered parking is designed to meet parking needs of the customers and residents of the area and operate the facility without any subsidy. The number of reserved spaces within the facility could be reduced and replaced with more public meter parking if approved by the City and the University. However, it should be noted that if the utilization of the spaces results in a funding deficit, the City and the University must share equally in the shortfall.

**Adding additional public parking spaces in the Intermodal facility would be appropriate in response to changes in the on-street supply and the desire to market or advertise specific locations for public parking.** Although the current 40 spaces have traditionally been underutilized, additional public meter spaces could be justified in support of promoting more parking awareness with wayfinding and the loss of other public parking spaces in the district. Changes to the parking rates for long term hourly parking may also be appropriate in this facility. Adjustments to the number of spaces could be made annually and would not require a long term commitment.

## STAFF COMMENTS:

A decision on the location and footprint of a plaza would allow for the City to move forward on preliminary design options. Moving ahead with preliminary design would involve hiring a design firm to develop general concepts and features for the plaza. If City Council moves forward, staff would create an interdisciplinary team with Planning, Parks and Recreation, and potentially 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 winter or the next fiscal year. If a consultant is hired this winter, concept work and public outreach would likely occur in the spring and summer. The Council will remember that the FY 20118/19 budget included $400,000 for the construction of a plaza in either Campustown or Downtown.

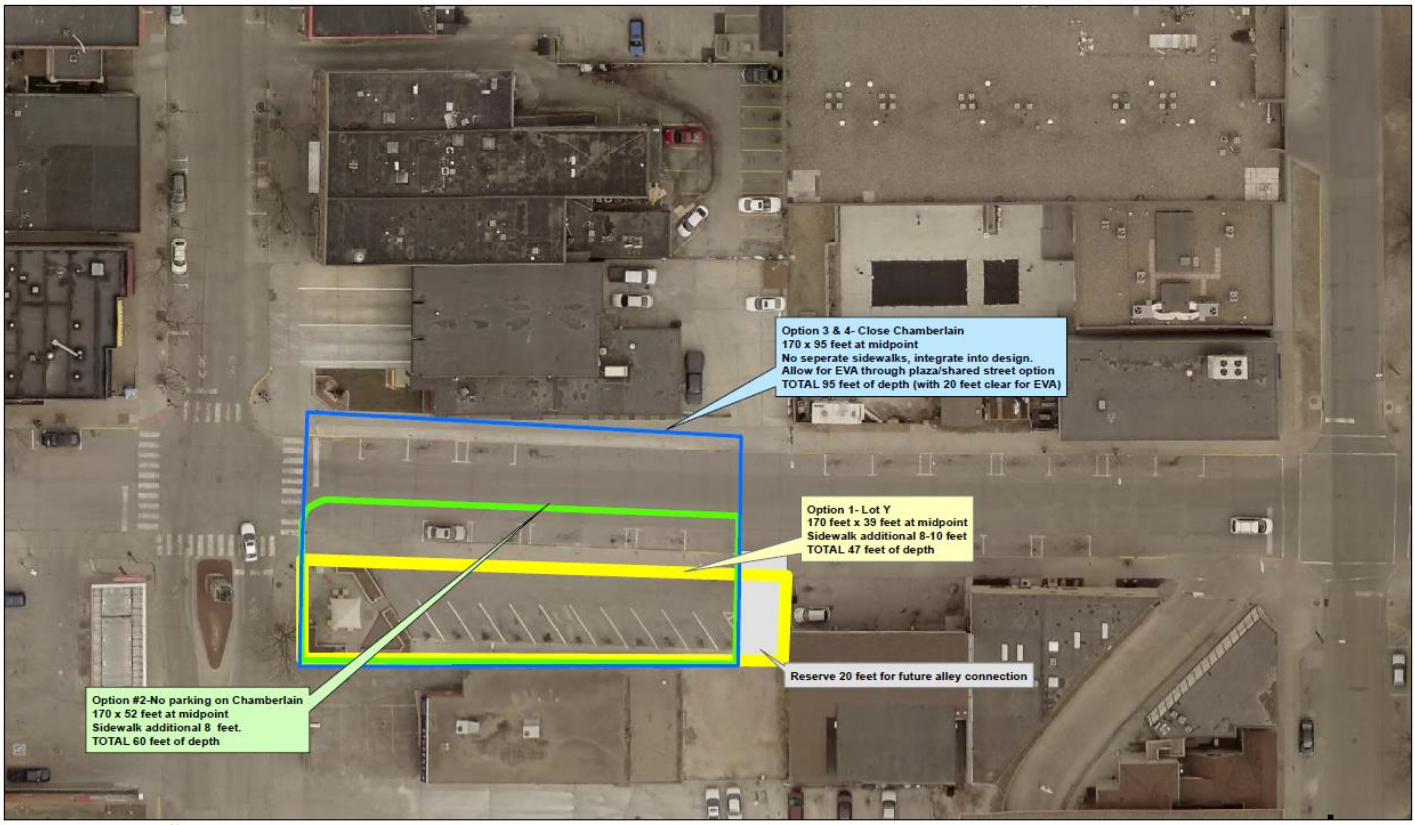
The parking needs of the Campustown are a combination of having the right types of timed parking, in the rights places, and quantity to support a diverse commercial business district as envisioned by the Land Use Policy Plan. Staff has identified strategies to support short

term parking options within the district that emphasize longer duration parking on the periphery of the area. **Staff believes these changes should be made regardless of proceeding with a plaza design**. Instituting a customer focused parking plan would assist in marketing efforts for the district and assist in the approach to creating wayfinding signage.

**Staff would support an additional policy that looks at increasing parking within the Intermodal Facility at a 1:1 ratio equal to the changes to long term parking options.** For example, the proposed changes to Lot Y and Lot X would, under this proposed policy, providing an additional 32 parking stalls in the Intermodal Facility, for a total of 72 spaces. However, it should be noted that concurrence from the University would be required to pursue this policy.

# Attachment A- Plaza

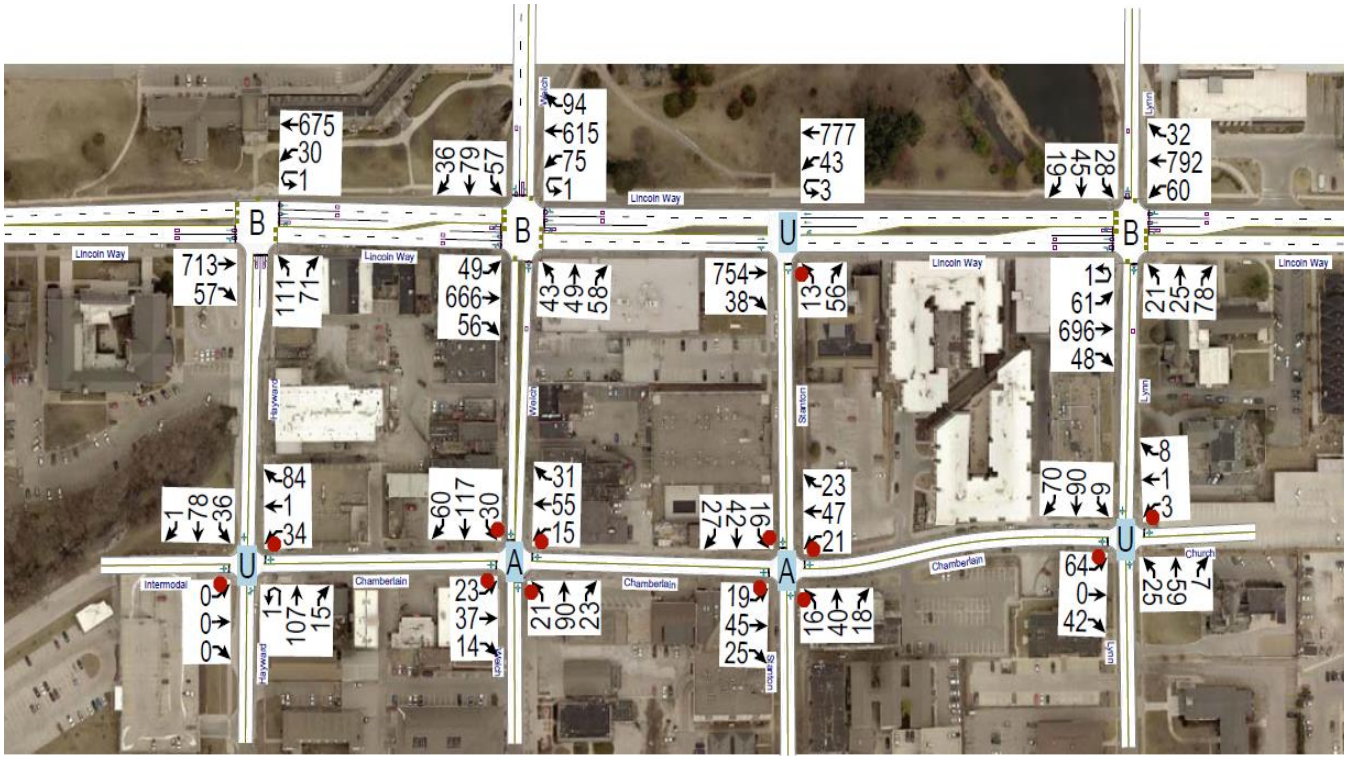
## Attachment B




**Plaza Dimension Options**

## Attachment C-Traffic Circulation

### Existing Peak Hour Traffic Conditions



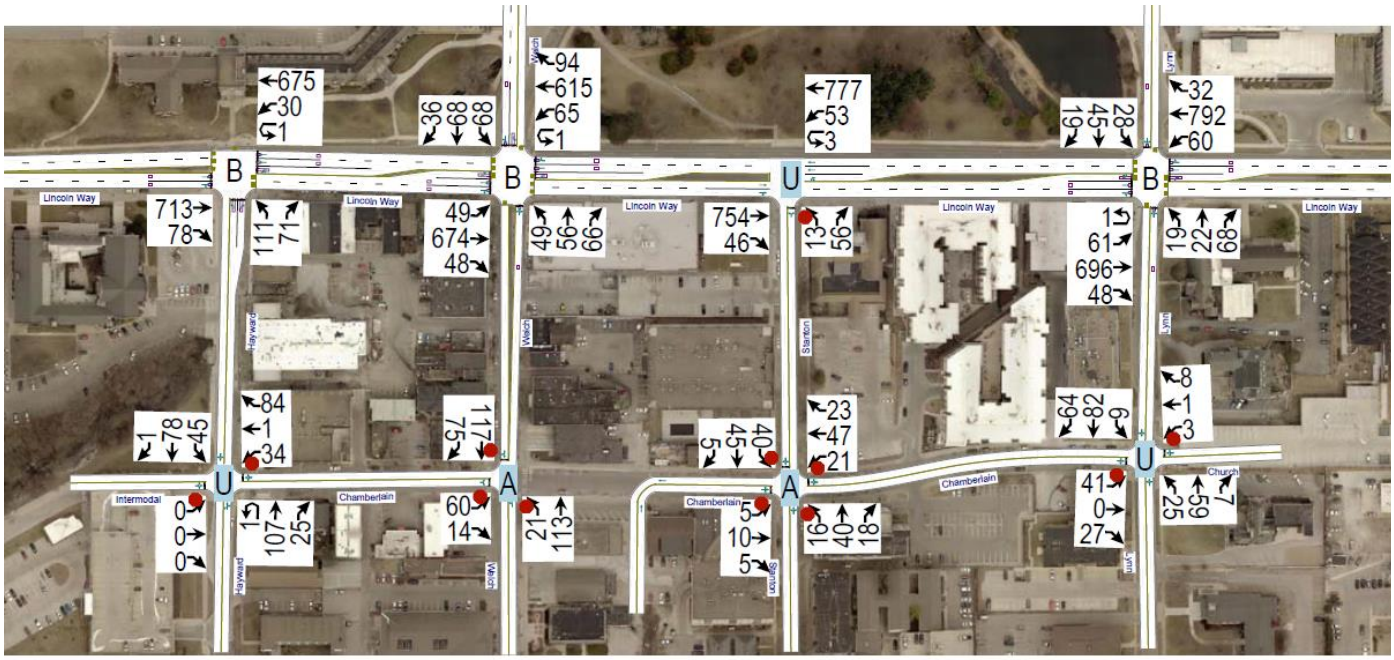

**Notes-**

- Letters indicate level of service (LOS) for an intersection. All intersection operations meet or exceed the City's LOS C goal.

- "U" indicates an uncontrolled intersection with no LOS calculation.

- Numbers by each arrow indicate the movement of vehicles through the intersection during the peak hour.

## Closure of Chamberlain- Peak Hour Traffic Circulation Model

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## Attachment D-Parking Inventory Map

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