

ITEM#: 31
DATE: 02-08-22

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: OVERNIGHT PARKING PERMIT PROGRAM FOR ALL METERED PARKING SPACES AND SURFACE PARKING LOTS WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

BACKGROUND:

On June 23, 2021, City Council referred a letter from the former Executive Director of Ames Main Street regarding an issue raised by their Economic Vitality Committee. The Committee felt that not having a permit that allowed Downtown residents to park overnight was a potential barrier to investment. Ames Main Street's proposal is as follows:

"...to implement an overnight permit process for all metered or lot spots, except Main Street, from 6:00 PM to 9:00 AM, seven days a week. The permit would effectively work opposite of the current daytime parking requirements. The Committee would recommend that the applicant must be a named owner or lessee within the Downtown district. This option would allow for greater utilization of our on-street parking during non-peak hours, with a requirement that those spots are to be vacated by the time that meters are turned on, allowing the City to collect some additional revenue during underutilized times"

One of the main reasons overnight parking has been prohibited in these spaces is to ensure efficient maintenance and cleaning of the Downtown area. Ames Main Street has acknowledged that snow removal, street sweeping, maintenance activities, and special events could conflict with this permit. Therefore, users of this proposed permit would be required to observe the snow ordinance restrictions and any other City maintenance or other public improvements that would make some, or all, of the eligible parking stalls in an area unusable for this permit for a temporary period. It should be understood that this proposal will cause an increase in administrative time to notify residents of snow events or public improvements and manage the essential business functions of the program itself.

FEES:

Currently, Downtown's parking options are parking metered spaces (\$0.50/hr from 9 AM to 6 PM, Mon-Sat), time-limited free parking in the CBD lots, and 24-hour Reserve Parking Permits (\$50/month). Using the Reserve rental rate of \$50/month as a base, staff believes \$25 per month is a feasible cost for a residential overnight parking permit.

Under this permit proposal, there would be a 15-hour period (6 PM to 9 AM), seven days a week, in which a registered Downtown resident could use any public Downtown metered or parking lot stall for overnight parking, excluding the Reserved stalls and Main Street stalls, for an equivalent cost of \$0.06 per hour (\$25/15 hours per day x 7 days per week x 4 weeks per month).

In the initial stages of this program, there is expected to be a relatively small number of residents who would take advantage of this program, which would result in high overhead costs. Over time, staff will evaluate the \$25/month rate along with other parking rates as part of a comprehensive approach to managing the financial sustainability of the City's parking system.

Furthermore, staff expects significant changes to parking in the Downtown area due to future Lincoln Way corridor developments. With the potential for new structured parking in the CBD lot, this program may need to change or cease altogether. Therefore, if approved, this Downtown Residential Overnight Parking permit program should be considered temporary. Once a business plan for the Downtown parking system is developed, staff will know the long-term viability of this program.

ZONING CONSIDERATIONS:

The Zoning Ordinance requires one parking space per residential dwelling unit for projects with more than 18 units, projects with less than 18 units are exempt from parking. Parking must be provided on site or remotely with City Council's approval, however the spaces must be available in perpetuity for the residential use if provided remotely.

It must be emphasized that this change to allow for overnight parking in public spaces will help facilitate convenience of parking for existing downtown residents and smaller residential/mixed use projects that do not require parking. However, the proposed overnight parking permit option does not eliminate the existing zoning requirement of "one parking space per residential dwelling unit for projects more than 18 units." Therefore, developments with more than 18 units will still be subject to existing parking standards, unless they are legally non-conforming.

City Council has a separate referral to the Planning Division regarding remote parking standards within the Zoning Ordinance. The issue of remote parking and the use of public parking spaces to meet parking requirements will be reviewed at that time.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Direct staff to implement a temporary Downtown Residential Overnight Parking Permit program with the following elements:
 - in effect from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 a.m.
 - only for parking in Downtown public metered spaces and surface parking lots
 - only available for individuals living in Downtown
 - a rate of \$25/month
 - permit holders must remove their cars from the Downtown metered spaces or lots when the City is engaged in snow removal, street/lot cleaning, maintenance, or special events
 - considered temporary and subject to change once a new long-term business plan for the Parking System is approved by the City Council

2. Direct staff to implement a temporary Downtown Residential Overnight Parking Permit at some other monthly rate.
3. Do not approve a program and maintain current parking policies.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

This proposed permitting system would allow Downtown residents the ability to park overnight in the areas nearer to their residences. This improves access and safety for these residents and provides an additional revenue stream to help fund the Parking System activities. This program is not intended to address any zoning issues associated with Downtown residential parking requirements.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as noted above.

COUNCIL ACTION SUMMARY

Meeting Date: July 13, 2021

Agenda Item #: Disposition

SUBJECT: Letter from Kim Frey, Ames Main Street Executive Director, requesting implementation of an Overnight Parking Permit Process for all Metered or Lot Spots within the Downtown District

ACTION TAKEN: Referred to staff for a Memo

MOTION BY: Martin

SECOND BY: Betcher

VOTING AYE: Beatty-Hansen, Betcher, Corrieri, Gartin, Junck, Martin

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: None

By: Amy L. Colwell, Deputy City Clerk

Sent to: John Joiner, Public Works Director



June 23, 2021

Mr. Steve Schainker, City Manager
City of Ames
515 Clark Avenue
Ames, IA 5001

Dear Steve,

Following up on my recent email, I am writing to secure the City's support in moving forward with a permitting process for overnight parking. The issue has been raised most recently by the Main Street Economic Vitality Committee as a potential barrier to Downtown investment, especially for residential and mixed-use development.

After speaking with the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee and the Main Street Economic Vitality Committee, our recommendation is to implement an overnight permit process for all metered or lot spots, except Main Street, from 6:00 PM to 9:00 AM, seven days a week. The permit would effectively work opposite of the current daytime parking requirements. The committee would recommend that the applicant must be a named owner or lessee within the Downtown district. This option would allow for greater utilization of our on-street parking during non-peak hours, with a requirement that those spots are to be vacated by the time that meters are turned on, allowing the city to collect some additional revenue during underutilized times.

Potential issues raised with this permitting process have been limited to snow removal, special events, and street maintenance (including street sweeping). The committee recommends a corresponding snow ordinance and lot instructions be attached to the permit application as well as posting appropriate signage requiring that vehicles be moved from snow routes, in accordance with current snow route requirements. Additionally, we would recommend a notification process, electronic and/or mail to permit holders for any planned maintenance or special events. Unplanned maintenance or regular street sweeping could be achieved by working around any legally parked vehicles, as is the expectation on other streets throughout the City, or by contacting the permit holder directly if needed for access.

Thank you for considering this important matter for our Downtown stakeholders. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance in moving this forward.

Sincerely,

Kim Frey

Kim Frey
Executive Director – Ames Main Street

CC: Dan Culhane, President & CEO, Ames Chamber of Commerce
Steve Goodhue, Chair, Ames Main Street