



**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
RESEARCH DIVISION**

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**CITY COUNCIL LUNCH AND LEARN  
DIA PRESENTATION – DOWNTOWN PARKING**

**Meeting Minutes**

**September 5, 2023  
12:00 p.m.**

**Location:** Lynwood Roberts Room, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, City Hall

**In attendance:** Council Members Ron Salem, Ken Amaro, Terrance Freeman, Michael Boylan, Joe Carlucci, Mike Gay, Jimmy Peluso

**Also:** Lori Boyer, Guy Parola, John Crescimbeni, Bob Carle, Todd Higginbotham – Downtown Investment Authority; Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Brittany Norris, Stephen Dare – Mayor’s Office; Phillip Peterson and Brian Parks – Council Auditor’s Office

**Meeting Convened:** 12:05 p.m.

Downtown Investment Authority CEO Lori Boyer convened the meeting and said the topic is downtown parking, including public parking, City assets, and downtown parking goals and strategies. The Public Parking Division operates City-owned garages; operates some, but not all, surface parking lots; manages parking meters and payment kiosks, and handles parking enforcement (i.e. handicapped parking, illegal parking, etc.) citywide. Public Parking operates as a self-sufficient enterprise fund. Capital maintenance of parking facilities is provided by the Public Works Department’s Public Buildings Division. The division does not control parking rates (City Council sets those rates with recommendations from the DIA board), does not control grants of free parking, and does not control the bagging of parking meters taken out of service for traffic management, special events, or private construction activity.

The City’s on-street parking assets include 1,424 metered spaces, 513 with mechanical meters and 911 with digital meters. Time limits range from 30 minutes to 4 hours at a rate of \$2 per hour. On-street rates are set in relation to garage parking, low enough to encourage use by short-term parkers but expensive enough to encourage parkers to use parking garages for all-day use. The Park Mobile app is available for all on-street parking. Mechanical parking meters are gradually being replaced with payment kiosks. By ordinance, on-street parking is free on weekends and on-street parking on the Southbank downtown is unmetered.

City-owned off-street parking assets include 5 garages downtown, 1 surface lot in Brooklyn, 2 surface lots near the jail on Bay Street, and the old Jacksonville Landing lot that is a CRA redevelopment parcel and not classified as a parking lot. ASM Global manages surface lots at the Sports Complex and at the convention center.

Primary goals of City-managed off-street public parking

- 1) Provide safe and convenient parking for City employees;
- 2) Use rates to balance supply and demand (highest rates in garages with the most demand);
- 3) Provide convenient, short-term parking for government building visitors (permit applicants, meeting attendees, library users).

Secondary goals are to provide evening parking for restaurants and entertainment venues, provide parking for businesses relocating to downtown, and to generate revenue for the enterprise fund.

Ms. Boyer reviewed the price structure and the primary tenants of the various parking garages and surface lots owned and/or operated by the Public Parking Division or the DIA and provided the history of the City's parking garage agreement with MPS.

Ms. Boyer reviewed the findings of a comprehensive parking study commissioned by the City from Tim Haas (now THA Consultants) in 2019. She said that a number of the recommendations from that study have been implemented, although some may need to be reconsidered following the reduction in downtown workers and parking demand following the COVID pandemic. THA has a contract with DIA to act as a parking consultant as issues arise. Overarching goals for downtown include: reducing the amount of new parking being constructed and encouraging shared use of parking facilities by multiple users; using City garages to provide parking for all City employees who desire parking; make available parking easier for drivers to find; ensure all parking is safe, attractive and easy to use; use parking facilities to support downtown redevelopment and activation; reduce the need for vehicles in downtown; and offset cost of downtown parking for customers with other benefits. Ms. Boyer noted that the City has eliminated parking requirements in the Zoning Code. A fundamental strategy is that parking meters downtown should be for short-term, rapid turnover use and long-term parking should be done in garages. Street meters should be priced higher per 8 hours than adjacent parking garages.

DIA control of downtown parking resources is one of the goals of the adopted Community Redevelopment Plan for downtown and parking is one of the redevelopment activities on which the CRA may expend redevelopment trust fund dollars.

CM Boylan asked if there is a cost to the public to park in the Florida Blue and FIS garages, in which public parking is reserved pursuant to redevelopment agreements, at night and on weekends. Ms. Boyer said they do not charge now but can, pursuant to the parking agreements, charge the cost of their operations to keep the garages open for those hours.

Proposed Ordinance Code amendments: 1) update references to meters to include changing technologies and parking strategies, dynamic pricing, garage discount programs, etc.; 2) address multiple legacy agreements that provide for free or discounted parking to various parties; 3) provide the Office of Public Parking or DIA a voice in the CIP process or allow the use of parking fund balance for maintenance responsibilities; 4) address use of facilities without charge by other departments for events, etc.; 5) provide greater autonomy to implement best practices, upgrades, etc.

#### Q & A

President Salem asked about City employee parking and the employee discount. Ms. Boyer said it was included in the Mayor's budget this year, not added by the Council as in the past 3 years. She recommended giving parking allowances directly to employees rather than discounting the rates, giving

the employee the choice to pay a higher rate at a garage or apply the allowance to a less expensive parking further away if they choose. Mr. Salem said that a shuttle system from City buildings to parking facilities could be implemented.

CM Peluso said he agrees with giving DIA more autonomy to control parking facilities and rates to make parking more efficient and accessible. Ms. Boyer said she has a long list of ideas for capital improvements that would improve the system but needs a funding source for that work.

CM Boylan said his Mandarin constituents typically complain about not knowing where to park downtown and think garages are inherently dangerous. Ms. Boyer said that DIA is in the planning stage for adding CCTV cameras in the garages that don't already have them, and with more resources they can upgrade signage, elevators, lighting, paint, etc. to make garages more attractive. Tax increment funds could be used for a more user-friendly parking availability app, but the Public Parking Enterprise Fund can't spend money on that type of use.

CM Amaro asked if parking kiosks would replace the ParkMobile app; Ms. Boyer said they would not.

CM Peluso asked if parking management could or should be moved from DIA to JTA. Ms. Boyer said functions like the parking app could, but probably not on-street parking which gets used by so many different agencies. She said JTA would probably not be interested in operating the garages that primarily serve City employees.

CM Freeman asked if there has been an overall transportation audit and master plan for downtown, including pedestrian facilities, U2C, etc. He is also interested in the capacity of DIA staff to manage growth in parking functions. Ms. Boyer said the DIA is supportive of the U2C and has given up a lane of parking on Bay Street for the U2C to have a dedicated travel lane. A transportation study with modeling was done recently on the traffic impact of changing 1-way streets to 2-way and inserting the Emerald Trail on some streets. Ms. Boyer said she did not see a need for much growth in City-owned parking capacity downtown, so not much need for an increase in management capacity.

CM Joe Carlucci asked about electric vehicle charging stations in City parking facilities. Bob Carle said there are currently 6 chargers, 2 each in 3 parking garages. JEA installed the chargers (slow chargers) and the City does not get any revenue from their operation. Ms. Boyer said she would like to see EV chargers installed on the roofs of parking garages with solar panels to provide power for vehicles and also shade to make roof parking more enticing. She also floated the idea of installing pickleball courts on the roofs of several parking garages where the top level is never parked on because of the sun and heat. CM Joe Carlucci asked why the DIA parking-related projects don't get funded in the CIP. Ms. Boyer said it is a matter of competition for limited resources among many worthwhile projects and parking projects have not risen to top priority.

Stephen Dare asked about scooter parking in garages. Ms. Boyer said privately owned scooters (not scooters rented via the DIA's scooter program) are allowed in garages, but Bob Carle said that there have been difficulties with some scooters and motorcycles trying to exit the garages because they are not big enough to trigger the exit gate to operate.

**Meeting adjourned:** 1:13 p.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

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