

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

- MEMORANDUM -

TO: COMMISSIONER RALPH CABRERA

DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2008

FROM: DAVID L. BROWN
CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT:
ON STREET PARKING MEETING

Following discussion at Commission Meetings concerning the loss of on-street parking, a meeting was set up by the City Manager's Office that included City Staff, the City's Parking Consultant Roamy Valera of Timothy Haahs & Associates, and Commissioner Cabrera. The purpose of this meeting was to begin a dialog on the impact that lost on-street parking will have on the parking system and business traffic in our urban core.

Future reductions in on-street parking supply will primarily result from implementation of the Streetscape Master Plan. Some of these impacts were reviewed in a November 2006 Parking Study. This Study specifically looked at the impacts of streetscape improvements within a specified zone of the central business district surrounding the Miracle Mile. The study provided an analysis of existing and near-term parking supply and demand issues within the specified zone; finding that there was adequate supply within that zone to offset any parking losses caused by proposed streetscape improvements.

I. STREETSCAPE MASTER PLAN

The Streetscape Master Plan provides a template that is applied to the public right-of-way anytime an adjacent property is developed. In short, the goal is to increase the tree canopy within the urban core and improve the pedestrian experience. Generally, anytime the template is applied to an existing right-of-way overall on-street parking supply will be reduced. The requirement that individual developments comply with the Streetscape Master Plan is currently codified in the City of Coral Gables Zoning Code section 5-1105(A) (2) which requires developers to provide "Landscaping, landscape islands, bulb outs, curbing, pedestrian crosswalk bulb outs, drainage and other associated traffic calming improvements . . . pursuant to the City Streetscape Master Plan and accompanying standards and/or Citywide Traffic Calming Plan."

Because these improvements are associated with individual development projects, the impact on the parking system will be staggered over many years. In addition, the impact on individual block faces will vary significantly based on existing conditions and the needs of each development. However, the expectation is that between 15% and 25% of on-street parking will eventually be converted to right-of-way, streetscape and pedestrian improvements.

There is clearly an economic value in on-street parking spaces for the City and for adjacent businesses. However, there is also a public and private value in providing the tree canopy and pedestrian amenities. There is general support for actions taken by the Commission to increase the tree canopy to improve the urban streetscape and pedestrian experience. But in reviewing individual developments and proposed layouts for the adjacent right-of-way, the City should be conscious of using the space efficiently and preserving as many on-street parking spaces as is practical.

II. PARKING STUDY FINDINGS

In November of 2006, a parking study for the Miracle Mile was completed. The primary zone covered was from Valencia Avenue to Giralda Avenue. The study was to determine whether there was adequate parking supply to cover spaces that would be lost in a proposed streetscape improvement plan for Miracle Mile and to make operational recommendations for operation of the parking system.

The key findings/recommendations of the parking study include:

- Although the on-street parking is at capacity during peak hours, the public garages are significantly underutilized during the peak hours.
- That assuming the streetscape improvements and completion of the near-term developments within the Miracle Mile zone, there would still be a surplus of 300 parking spaces.
- That parking management/operations of the public garages should be modified to increase utilization and give priority to short-term parking (customers).
- That the City should invest in developing the linkages and connectors between the existing parking supply and customers' destinations.

This parking study evaluates supply and demand issues within an impact zone and the parking system that serves that zone. Implicit within the study is that any future activity that significantly impacts either supply or demand would trigger an updated evaluation of findings and recommendations. Since completion of the study, management of the parking garages was modified to improve utilization. The increase in revenue generated by the garages (annualized at approximately \$700,000) demonstrates the improved utilization. However, this parking study did not review any supply or demand issues related to zones outside the Miracle Mile impact zone that are affected by the Streetscape Master Plan.

III. RESPONSES TO SUPPLY AND DEMAND ISSUES

In the recent past, Coral Gables has taken action to increase parking supply or mitigate demand on several occasions. Three examples that demonstrate various means of addressing supply and demand issues within the parking system are:

- Merrick Place, a 450 space public facility was developed at Aragon and Galiano. The Museum Garage, a 586 space public facility opened in June of 2005.
- In private developments the City has negotiated additional supply, beyond what is required by zoning, for public use. Gables Grand provides 300 parking spaces dedicated to public use. Similarly, the Village of Merrick Park developed 400 additional public spaces dedicated to public use.
- On the demand side, the City developed a Trolley system that provides transit services along the Ponce de Leon Boulevard corridor. Recent studies of the Trolley system undertaken by the University of Miami indicate that the Trolley System may reduce parking demand within downtown Coral Gables by as much as 712 spaces a day.

We know that over time, the available supply of general on-street parking spaces will continue to diminish as the Streetscape Master Plan is implemented. There is also an expectation that as infill occurs and development projects are completed within the urban core, the demand for existing public parking spaces will continue to increase. Therefore, it is imperative that the Parking Department monitor occupancy rates within the parking system as well as projects that will impact supply and/or demand for parking. When the demand for parking begins to approach or exceed the capacity of the available supply, the City will need to develop and implement strategies to reduce demand or increase supply. These strategies are being developed concurrently.

IV. FUTURE OPTIONS

As a result of the review of the Streetscape Master Plan, the existing Parking Study, and known development projects; the City should move to ensure the following happen:

- Ensure that the Parking Department is involved in reviewing streetscape improvement proposals as projects are developed so that space remaining dedicated to public parking is used as efficiently as possible.
- Manage public off-street facilities in a way that efficiently maximizes utilization. For the purposes of evaluating system utilization. The Administration is looking for occupancy levels in excess of 85%.
- Incorporate excess capacity in private garages into satisfying peak demand requirements. This could be accomplished by allowing valet companies to use private parking facilities in off peak hours or by allowing the owner to sell excess space. Oversight could be maintained by requiring that the Parking Department certify that there is excess capacity before the owner or valet company could begin selling space in a private parking facility.
- Where existing facilities are fully utilized and potential development projects are identified, the City should contract for a Demand and Feasibility study. This study can identify what additional parking supply is justified as well as provide for development and funding options.

One of the hallmarks of downtown Coral Gables is streets that are active with pedestrians involved in commerce and social activity. To continue the economic growth and vitality in our urban core the City will need to continue to improve the pedestrian environment and provide convenient parking. To achieve both of these goals will require the loss of some on-street parking, sound management of existing parking supply and development of additional off-street parking. With sound planning downtown Coral Gables will continue to be a place where people want to be.

c. Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission