



**Diane Nichols Tradd**  
*Assistant City Manager/DPD Director*

*Craig Thomas*  
*Deputy Director*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager 

FROM: Diane N. Tradd, Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

SUBJECT: MOTION OF 1/8/19 BY COUNCILOR NUON  
REQUEST CITY MANAGER ESTABLISH A WORKING GROUP TO EXAMINE JUDICIAL CENTER PARKING IN THE HAMILTON CANAL DISTRICT, OVER THE SHORT AND LONG TERM, AND PROVIDE POLICY AND PLANNING GUIDANCE AND COORDINATION, ADVISORY BODY SHOULD INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES FROM DPD, DCAMM, LRTA, PARKING AUTHORITY, COURTS, HCD COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES AND ANY OTHERS AS DETERMINED BY THE CITY MANAGER

As the development of the Lowell Justice Center and Hamilton Canal Innovation District (“HCID”) continues to move forward, DPD has and continues to monitor the expected parking demand for the Downtown with the build out of the HCID. Based on the HCID Master Plan development demand, the City has designed an approximately 900 space parking garage to support this new development, with the anticipation that the parking structure will be completed in 2020. Because the Justice Center has grown in scale since it was first considered, DPD has conducted some parking analysis and extensively reviewed a number of options in order to address additional parking needs. This includes reviewing options to shift some parking users to the Ayotte and Lower Locks Garages as well as begin to consider a future garage on the Davidson Street lot that would also allow the City to be able to shift users of the Roy and Early garages and free up additional space in these structures.

As an additional long term strategy, DPD has worked with Middlesex 3 Coalition, which features large downtown employers and institutions, including Enterprise Bank, Middlesex Community College and Lowell Community Health Center in order to discuss and address parking needs for their constituents. As to be expected, current occupants in Downtown are eager to ensure that sufficient parking and transit options will continue to be in place while new development occurs.

As a part of this collaboration, Middlesex 3 conducted a survey of employees in the Downtown area, with over 2,000 responses. All of the aforementioned parties have been working together to review the survey findings and explore alternative transit options to vehicular parking in the immediate area of Downtown businesses, such as park and ride lots on the City periphery (like at Cawley Stadium or possibly privately owned sites) where individuals could park and then take a shuttle into the Downtown.

The City received a Sarbanes grant to prepare a Request for Qualifications to provide Planning and Design services for the Downtown Lowell Multimodal Complete Streets Plan, which includes: analysis of existing bus routes, development and analysis of a new bus route scenario for the HCID and Downtown and other multimodal improvements, including Transportation Demand Management strategies. DPD has worked with LRTA on developing the RFQ for this study and anticipates it being advertised shortly.

In an effort to provide parking to the Justice Center, the City has also discussed with DCAMM the possibility of a 2-bay garage structure to be located on Parcel 1 (lot adjacent to the Judicial Center – see attached map). During the design phase, DPD staff met with DCAMM’s Architect to discuss the need for parking and assess the feasibility of such a garage structure. The City engaged Walker Consultants to provide some conceptual layouts for a garage on the property. In order for a 2-bay garage to fit, additional land is needed as the property is not quite wide enough. Initially, the City and DCAMM looked at utilizing a portion of the Judicial Center site. However, this was found not to be feasible due to the necessary location of utilities. In order to gain the necessary width for a garage structure, the City would need to be willing to utilize existing right-of-way. The City has communicated with DCAMM and asked them to strongly encourage both employees and jurors to take public transportation.

The City has received interest from private parties that would like the opportunity to construct a privately owned and operated garage facility utilizing Parcel 1 and the previously mentioned right-of-way. As such, DPD has begun to solicit an appraisal for the property as required by DHCD for urban renewal property. Additionally, DPD has drafted an RFP and will advertise for a garage project by the end of the month. The Law Department is reviewing the property title in order to ensure no title flaws exist.

The earliest a garage could begin to be developed on the site is January 1, 2020, as DCAMM has a temporary construction easement for the construction of the Justice Center that will run through the end of the year.

In the short term, Parcels 2, 3A and 4 have a temporary parking lot for users of 110 Canal and Parcel 5 is being used as a parking area for the Justice Center workers. Additionally, as a part of the HCID North infrastructure project, the City is building a temporary parking lot on Parcels 11 and 12 (see attached map for reference). DPD is also communicating with private property owners who have expressed interest in developing parking on their property on a temporary basis.

The Administration and DPD recognize that parking is a high priority for the City Council and downtown businesses and residents and are committed to continue to engage the partners identified in the motion as well as other concerned parties to develop a comprehensive strategy to address transit issues for the Downtown.

DNT/ns

1/17/19

Attachment

cc: Claire V. Ricker, Chief Design Planner  
Joseph Giniewicz, Urban Renewal Project Manager

