



Diane Nichols Tradd
Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

Craig Thomas
Deputy Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*

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

DATE: January 14, 2020

SUBJECT: 15-MINUTE PARKING SPACE POLICY

The Transportation Engineer receives multiple petitions and online requests for timed, free, on-street parking spaces from businesses located within the downtown and in neighborhood business districts. Typically, a 15-minute space (§266-51) is requested, but the City also has ordinances to support 30-minute (§266-52), 1 hour (§266-53) and 2-hour (§266-54) spaces. Given the volume of requests, the time it takes to investigate and measure for each space, the limited availability of parking in Lowell and the revenue generation that is eliminated each time a metered spot is removed and replaced with a timed, free, on-street space, it is appropriate for the City to develop a policy for 15-minute spots. Currently, businesses can request a timed, free, on-street space in front of their business via a petition at the City Clerk's office. Other communities have different models including the following:

- Free parking for the first 12 minutes in any metered spot; if a vehicle stays longer, they pay for the whole time (Concord, MA)
- All metered parking, with high demand spots only allowing 30 mins or 60 mins (Cambridge and Worcester MA)
- Higher rates for on-street parking for 15-min, 30-min and 1 hour spots as compared to rates in the garages (Boston, MA and multiple other cities)
- Designating some metered 15-min spots around the downtown area (Portland, ME)
- Designating a specific number of 15-min spots in a City block (Altoona, PA)
- Twenty-six (26) free 15-minute parking spots downtown around restaurants and retailers; created from outdated 15-minute loading zones (Harrisburg, PA)

The Department of Planning and Development applied for and received a \$225,000 grant from the FY20 Housing Choice Community Capital Grant to fund a parking study. The parking study will be a comprehensive long-term planning study. It will evaluate all current parking policies within the City, including downtown parking, the City's residential dwelling program, residential parking areas, evaluating the use of shared parking, municipally owned parking garages, overnight residential parking in City lots and the City's parking ordinances and parking requirements for development. All petitions for timed, free, on-street parking received in 2019 have been investigated and if appropriate, will be included on the next 60-day trial memo before the Council. The Parking Director and the Transportation Engineer recommend putting a freeze on any new petitions for timed, free, on-street spaces until the parking study is completed and the Chief Design Planner has guidelines and recommendations in order to form a policy regarding public parking. Note that all existing parking ordinances will be evaluated and may be revised after the completion of the parking study.

NV/ns

cc: Natasha Vance, Transportation Engineer
Claire Ricker, Chief Design Planner
Terry Ryan, Parking Director