MEMO

TO: Advisory Committee

FROM: Jonathan Slason

DATE: April 28, 2021

SUBJECT: Advisory Committee April meeting notes (Mtg #2)

Meeting Attendees:

Advisory Committee:

- Laura Dlugolecki (Infrastructure Commission)
- Meredith Bay-Tyack (Downtown Winooski/Business community)
- Seth Leonard (Affordable housing advocate)
- Erik Hoekstra (Development community)
- Terry Zigmund (Planning Commission)

Technical Committee:

- Eric Vorwald (City of Winooski)
- Jason Charest (CCRPC)
- Chris Dubin (CCRPC)
- Jonathan Slason (RSG)
- Andy Hill (DESMAN)

Public:

- Mayor Kristine Lott

No public comment period was held due to the absence of general public members.

Jason Charest initiated the meeting and confirmed no members of the general public wished to speak.

Jonathan Slason reviewed the agenda with the meeting attendees. It was noted that the committee received a large PDF in advance of the meeting with data from the parking occupancy data and the survey. The survey will run for another week or so and a full

summary of the survey data will be available on the project website and sent to the committee members.

Jonathan started with the review of parking occupancy data that has been collected. The average occupancy citywide in the AM and PM is 27% and 28% respectively, although some segments at some times of the day are above 50% occupied. Overall, the city appears to have sufficient capacity on the street to accommodate either more parking or remove the supply for other purposes.

An ArcGIS online map presents the findings from the occupancy data and is available for all to review a segment-by-segment visualization of the degree of spaces occupied. The GIS data also shows the number of observations by period and the total number of spaces (SPACE_TOT).

Jonathan then started reviewing key findings from the web survey that has been sent out throughout the Winooski community. The pre-meeting data included a more thorough summary of the survey data. Additional analysis and summary of the survey will be completed upon closing the survey.

The survey data provided valuable insights on the demographics of the survey respondents and in particular the vehicle ownership characteristics. On average there are 1.55 vehicles per household. This falls between the observed range from the American Community Survey that shows a range of 1.51 to 1.78 with a citywide average of 1.6.

They survey summarized where residents and employees park as well as guests who shop, dine, or drop people off. The majority of vehicles are parked off street, which aligns with the occupancy data.

The survey also provided a snapshot of which streets in Winooski may experience high occupancy. These identified where vehicle parkers frequently, occasionally, or seldomly experience difficulty parking. The survey data aligns with the occupancy data suggesting that certain streets that were observed to have higher on-street occupancy rates also were identified in the survey.

Jonathan then identified how relevant is the survey and parking data as it was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two sources of data were used to establish that the covid effects are relatively minor for the purposes of this study, which is predominately focused on residential areas of the city.

The first source is the survey data. The survey data indicates that residents of Winooski have increased their parking demands, particularly those who are now teleworking. Slightly more than half of residents who are working are doing at least some of their work from home. This would suggest that parking occupancy during the day may be slightly higher than compared to pre-covid. However, only around 28% were full time working remotely. Residents who are working remotely are assumed that their pre-work and post-work parking demands haven't changed.

For employees in Winooski who don't live in the city, they have a lower rate of teleworking. With the majority of workers being on-site to the same degree pre-covid. For employees overall in the city, they only use on-street parking 20% of the time. Therefore, the pre-covid vs. pandemic rates of parking being observed is a function of the portion of employees working remotely and their likelihood to park on street. This would suggest observing less than a 10% change in on-street parking demand.

The survey data also indicates that the majority of business owners observed either no change or only slight reduction in parking demand. However, this sample is very small at the time of the analysis (only 7 respondents).

The second source of data compared pre-covid parking occupancy data (May 2018) to the parking occupancy data observed on Weaver Street. The pre-meeting data provided a segment-by-segment breakdown in how parking occupancy varied. Overall, the pandemic increased the parking occupancy between 2% and 10% depending on the side of the street and time period.

Overall, employee data and resident data suggest that the total degree of change may be in margins of errors of any typical parking occupancy variation.

Areas of the study area with more commercial uses, such as parts of Malletts Bay Avenue and Main Street may have lower occupancy than when compared to pre-covid numbers. However, other data sources strongly support that there will be a lag if not a new normal post-pandemic. Therefore, rather than comparing a to a pre-covid value, it will be more important to establish a new baseline and monitor from this baseline.

Andy Hill discussed his insights from other studies and observations in the parking industry on the demands for parking. Non-residential parking demands will lag for some time and may never return to pre-covid levels for some industries. Some businesses may never recover, some businesses may shift their business model, and an increase in teleworking is likely here to stay.

Andy reviewed the objectives for the policies and management strategies for the parking study. First, Andy identified comparable peer communities in Vermont. These were identified as Burlington, Rutland, Brattleboro, Middlebury, and Montpelier. Second, the management, enforcement, and parking rate structure for each community was discussed. Best practices were identified and insights on how the rate structure could be altered to meet other objectives were outlined.

Andy then discussed the management strategy of residential parking permit programs. As predominately residential streets are likely to experience increased parking demand in the future, the residential permit system can be a powerful tool to enforce the supply of parking is available for a certain population. However, the designs of these programs can vary significantly, and Andy walked through pros and cons of various programs as well as identified best practices and notable national examples.

Andy noted that enforcement fines are comparable to other communities with one exemption being the fee for exceeding the posted time limit. It was noted in the meeting

that this fee was likely set out of convenience and negotiation with business leaders fearing that higher fees would threaten guests and visitors from returning to Winooski. The project team will reassess and propose other values that the city could consider in upcoming policy changes.

Andy then covered the parking requirements as identified in the current zoning rules and regulations. First, the issue of a relatively broad commercial parking rate of 3 spaces per KSF for many land uses. Andy said that broad characterization can be both a good and a bad thing, as some land uses may require more flexibility and more spaces on average, while some less so. So it is a calculated decision to use this rate. The second issue is the topic of reserved uses and how certain land uses can reserve parking for specific users. This should be reviewed and confirmed and maybe other options can ensue such as shared parking agreements or changing the quantity of reserved parking. The third topic is the one of allowing on-street public space to satisfy the parking requirements per zoning for the land development. This is noted as setting dangerous precedent and may be grounds for litigious action. Eventually, the availability of on-street supply may be too limited to satisfy the zoning requirements. At this point in time, precedent has been set and there may be grounds for the city to provide parking or waive the requirements.

The last topic reviewed by the project team included a quick review of common policies that are used to reduce the amount of parking provided in a land development. These include shared parking and shared uses, transportation demand management (TDM), remote parking options, waivers and allowances, and requirements for other modes such as bicycles.

The topic of Main Street came up as an example where new bike lanes are going to be created. How do such provisions change the amount of parking provided? Jonathan answered initially these options may not move the needle on the amount of parking needed. If people still own vehicles at the same rate, whether they use them for travel or not, is secondary. Overtime however, as alternative travel options become more prevalent there should be a reduction in the number of vehicles owned by households and therefore fewer parking spaces provided. Andy added that it requires a carrot and stick approach. The carrot is the provision of alternative travel options – bike lanes, improved transit, etc. The stick is the use of pricing, management policies, and other options to reinforce certain behaviors. Eventually, the carrots and sticks can reduce the number of vehicles and the supply of parking.

Seth Leonard mentioned that he would like to see in the policies and management section some acknowledgment that a vehicle space in a multiunit affordable housing project can cost upwards of 30k to build. Amortized over 30 years that space requires $83 per month for the 30 year mortgage.

The project team will be creating maps with the parking supply identified, showing the numbers of spaces on the street and estimated number off-street spaces. These maps can also show where the existing residential parking permit programs are in place. The

ArcGIS Online map does have a layer showing the number of parking spaces for the on-street segments.

Terry mentioned that we should consider the effectiveness of existing rules on the books rather than try to create new ones. She mentioned issues with technicalities of moving vehicles a few feet to avoid running afoul of tickets and violations (have to move an on-street vehicle at least once every 5 days).

The committee identified interest in seeing where enforcement actions have occurred.

Jonathan concluded the meeting by summarizing the schedule of the study and the next meeting which will be in late May or early June. The meeting will showcase results from the modeling, future scenarios evaluated, identified areas where management might be valuable to consider, and a review of various management and policies.

Meeting ended at 8:00 pm EST.