

## ARLINGTON MASTER TRANSPORTATION PLAN **PARKING AND CURB SPACE MANAGEMENT ELEMENT**

### **I. Introduction**

The Parking and Curb Space Element of The Master Transportation Plan (MTP) focuses on the provision and management of parking and curb space which are key contributors to the financial health of the County's commercial corridors and efficient working of the County's transportation network.

The MTP Goals and Policies document adopted in November 2007 articulates the vision for Arlington's transportation. The document specifies three general policies that form the foundation of the MTP and, therefore, transportation in Arlington in the years ahead:

- integrating transportation with land use;
- supporting the design and operation of complete streets; and
- managing travel and demand and transportation systems.

The MTP establishes six broad goals for Arlington's transportation policy:

1. Provide high-quality transportation services.
2. Move more people without more traffic.
3. Promote safety.
4. Establish equity.
5. Manage effectively and efficiently.
6. Advance environmental sustainability.

These goals are supported by strategies to help focus actions in the future. Strategies that relate to parking and curb space management identified in the MTP Goals and Policies document include:

- Construct and manage streets to be "Complete Streets". Streets should be safe and comfortable for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, and other uses.
- Facilitate car-sharing and regulate taxi-cab service to ensure they provide high-quality services that complement transit, paratransit and non-motorized travel options.
- Implement land-use policies such as transit-oriented and mixed-use development that result in better access and use of the transportation system.
- Encourage the use of environmentally sustainable modes, including bicycling, walking, transit, carpooling, and telecommuting.
- Ensure transportation facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Manage motor vehicle congestion by emphasizing transportation alternatives, parking management, and queue management.
- Identify and pursue policies that take advantage of new technologies that can enhance the quality and efficiency of transportation facilities and services. Carefully design and implement demonstrations of such innovations.
- Plan, measure and evaluate service with a general emphasis on daily and weekly peak demand.
- Increase energy efficiency and reduce hydrocarbon emissions by encouraging and accommodating non-motorized travel, public transit, carpooling, telecommuting, and alternative-fuel vehicles.

A number of specific policies were adopted in November 2007 that relate to parking and curb space management. This element provides background material to explain the rationale behind the policies and identifies implementation actions required to put these policies into practice. Performance measures will help to prove the success of these actions.

## **II. The Role of Parking in Meeting the Challenges of the Next 25 Years**

Over the next twenty-five years, the County's population and job growth are expected to produce a one-third increase over current travel demands. As is laid out in the MTP Goals and Policies document, the MTP does not propose substantial right-of way expansion or additions to the street network. As a result, it will be necessary to meet this growth challenge by accommodating more people in fewer vehicle trips, if we are to avoid unacceptable levels of congestion which compromise our quality of life and business climate. The amount of parking supplied by the private and public sector and how it is managed needs to be adjusted in these changing times.

Parking and curb space are critical features of our transportation infrastructure, and their provision should be carefully coordinated with planning for other transportation elements. Provision of curb space is related to development of new streets, and its management and prioritization is related to the land uses in the immediate vicinity.

The provision of parking is related to development of each parcel of land. It is essential to provide the right amount of parking – too much parking increases congestion of the road network, too little parking diminishes access to the area. Both are hazardous to the economic health of the area. The amount of parking required for an area depends on various factors such as the planned capacity of surrounding streets, other transportation options, existing and proposed land uses, as well as environment-friendly goals set by Arlington.

The management of parking areas is required to accommodate as much demand as possible within the available supply of parking, and prioritize use when there is conflicting demand. On-street and off-street public parking is an amenity that should be available for public use to the maximum extent feasible. However, management may be required to ensure that the intended users are adequately served and the desired character of the neighborhood is maintained. Public parking in Arlington varies from on-street to off-street spaces, garages to surface lots, and spaces serving commercial to residential neighborhoods. Parking provided by the private sector is usually related to specific developments and should serve motorists accessing the site. However, to ensure the best use of the site and the amenity, the parking spaces should be shared with other parkers where possible.

This element encourages drivers to make an intelligent choice between transportation options by helping the end user identify the real cost of parking. The County's efforts in implementing transportation demand measures (TDM) and developing mixed-use urban environments have increased the viability of various transportation options. This element strives to enrich the lives of residents by making car-ownership a choice rather than a necessity.

The on-and off-street parking policies outlined in this element support the Complete Streets initiative. Reducing the number of vehicle trips not only helps to reduce the parking demand, but also allows for a better balance between the various users of the right-of-way. Reducing traffic congestion enhances the environment of the street for all users. This element promotes ways to help drivers quickly evaluate the options for parking and get their vehicle out of the stream of traffic.

This element espouses policies that reflect the diversity of the community and the environmentally-conscious values that make Arlington such a special place.

### III. Arlington's Parking and Curb Space Management Policies, Implementation Actions and Performance Measures

This section lists specific implementation actions that further the goals of the MTP and associated performance measures. Approved policies relating to parking and curb space management (listed in the MTP Goals and Policies, adopted November 2007) are grouped under several objectives. Policies can be translated into reality by identifying implementation actions that provide specific direction on the intended outcomes. Performance measures are proposed to assess progress towards achieving the policies. Identifying and prioritizing implementation actions and performance measures help determine future budgetary needs which are meant to inform the County's budgeting process in the years to come.

#### Prioritize and Manage Curb Space

**Policy 1:** Prioritize the use of curb space, matching the various types of uses to the most appropriate locations. In commercial areas and high-density residential areas, generally consider bus stops, curb nubs, taxi stands, paratransit pickup, short-term retail and handicapped parking to be the highest priority.

#### *Implementation Action:*

- a) [s] [n] Develop a methodology to evaluate a priority of curb space users for each zoning district by identifying all potential users and the required length of curb space for each user. [include qualifying statement on each use]
  - i. The approximate hierarchy is likely to be: high priority for bus stops, curb nubs, taxi stands, paratransit drop-off areas, metro stations drop-off areas, and handicapped parking spaces; lower priority for short-term customer parking, loading and deliveries, slug lines, and car sharing spaces; lowest priority for tour bus parking, valet parking, and all-day commuter parking. These priorities will shift depending on the local land uses, overall makeup of a district, proximity to transit services, and availability of all types of curb space. A methodology will be developed to prioritize demand and optimize use of curb space.
  - ii. The competition for curb space is most acute during the workday. To better manage the available curb space, time restrictions and reserving spaces will give priority to the appropriate users at appropriate times.
  - iii. The County proposes to maximize the supply of curb space by providing diagonal or perpendicular parking where feasible, creating new streets in designated development areas, and minimizing curb cuts and encouraging off-street loading areas for new development.
- b) [s] [n] Establish tour and shuttle bus parking zones based on the number of buses, visiting hours, and locations of destinations identified by stakeholders, especially bus operators, hotels, and other tourism-based businesses.
  - i. The County proposes to work with tour and shuttle bus operators, hotels and other business interests to determine the need (spaces, hours, locations) for bus parking. Suitable locations will then be identified for the establishment of tour and shuttle bus parking zones. Opportunities will be identified to share the zone when demand is low. These new zones will be published and communicated through maps, brochures, a website, etc. to bus operators.

- c) [s] [n] Encourage valet parking in high-density areas.
  - i. Valet parking increases convenience for customers, reduces the demand for on-street parking and allows vehicles to be taken out of the stream of traffic efficiently and quickly. Valet parking will be encouraged in high-density areas by identifying curb space and off-street parking opportunities, and adopting an ordinance or administrative policies that will make the application process easy to use and ensure that the valet operation is safely operated.

**Policy 2:** Increase curb space availability through use of measures such as off-street loading, time specific regulations, street redesigns or re-striping and new street space.

*Implementation Action:*

- a) [o] Continue to follow policies or procedures which govern each of these measures as follows:
  - i. Off-street loading: Existing site plan procedures require provision of off-street loading facilities.
  - ii. Time-specific regulations: Existing administrative policies based on abutting land use govern time restrictions for meters or signs. Time restrictions are re-evaluated on request.
  - iii. Street redesigns: Street redesigns take place through a variety of programs and as a matter of practice seek to maximize the amount of on-street parking as safety and right-of-way permit.
  - iv. Street re-striping: In the case of single-spaced meters, individual parking spaces are marked and follow the 22 foot standard for length. In the case of multi-space meters and sign-restricted parking, individual spaces are not marked, and experience indicates that more cars naturally are parked in the same block. The standard width for marked on-street parking spaces and lanes is 8 feet.
  - v. New Street Space: New streets are designed and built to optimize on-street parking, unless space constraints or other functional considerations dictate otherwise.

**Policy 13:** Provide travel options for persons with disabilities through reserved access to curb space and dedicated off-street parking, with enforcement.

*Implementation Actions:*

- a) [o] Continue to dedicate on-street parking for persons with disabilities on request and when the County's criteria are met. See Appendix A for Arlington County's Criteria for Installing Reserved Parking for Persons with Disabilities.

Support Complete Streets

**Policy 3:** Promote on-street parking within residential neighborhoods and on commercial streets to calm traffic, support retail activity, and efficiently use public resources.

*Implementation Actions:*

- a) [s] [o] Continue to use on-street parking spaces as traffic calming devices. They compel drivers to slow down thus improving the safety of a street,
- b) [s] [o] Continue to use on-street parking to support retail activity. In accordance with established County standards, time restrictions are established to support the type of businesses on a block to encourage appropriate levels of turnover and discourage long term parkers.

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[o] Ongoing    [n] New    [s] Short term    [m] Medium term    [l] Long term

**Policy 7:** Discourage off-street surface parking, particularly when it is located between the curb and the building face.

*Implementation Actions:*

- a) [o] [n] In site plan developments, off-street surface parking should not be allowed, except in cases of certain institutions such as schools and hospitals or in cases of a new internal street design that includes “on-street” parking on private property.
- b) [o] [n] In non-site plan developments, off-street parking should only be allowed on the back sides of buildings.

Manage Existing Parking Supply

**Policy 4:** Provide residential permit parking to manage the parking supply, limit overspill parking, and reduce the effects of vehicle congestion in single-family housing zones.

*Implementation Actions:*

- a) [s] [o] Continue to work with residents to identify areas affected by overspill parking and implement residential permit parking zones if warranted.

**Policy 5:** Utilize parking meter pricing strategies that vary by hour and location to better match parking availability and demand. Implement newer technologies such as multi-space meters and credit card and cell phone payment to enhance parking options.

*Implementation Actions:*

- a) [s] [o] Install multi-space parking meters that use new technology within Metro corridors, including those that accept credit cards.
- b) [s] [n] Evaluate the appropriateness of extending parking meters to nighttime and weekend.
  - i. An overall goal of ensuring the appropriate use of on-street parking to serve short-term needs of customers and visitors of proximate businesses can be served by extending meter hours. Many parking spaces in areas such as Ballston, Clarendon and Crystal City are full after 6 pm when the meters are no longer in effect. These parking spaces are often taken up by residents who live close by or employees who work at neighboring businesses. These fully-occupied spaces discourage patrons from coming to our areas. By extending the hours of the meters, fewer long term users would park in the spaces, thus freeing the spaces up to short term patrons of our businesses.
- c) [m] [n] Develop a variable pricing policy (ordinance) to help maintain optimal occupancy levels of on-street parking.
- d) [m] [n] Establish pay by cell phone technology for Arlington County as soon as enforcement compatibility issues are resolved.

**Policy 9:** Maximize the sharing of parking space, including in private parking lots and garages, by various users throughout the day and night. Discourage assigned parking. Balance shared parking goals with the preservation of neighborhood character in church, lodge and school parking lots in residential areas.

- d) [s] [o] Continue to use the site plan process to encourage shared parking.
  - i. Buildings approved through the site plan review process are encouraged to open up their garages at hours later than their building is normally open. The County could also encourage buildings to identify opportunities for shared parking with buildings in the vicinity that have different peak hours for their garages or have excess capacity. When a shared parking arrangement is used to satisfy the minimum requirement for site plan conditions, a written agreement would be required. The option of negotiating shared parking may encourage developers to build a conservative number of parking spaces thus attempting to lower trip generation for the building.
- e) [l] [n] Collect annual data on usage and efficiency of all garages.

**Policy 10:** Encourage the separation (“unbundling”) of the price of parking from the price of owning, renting or leasing a housing or office unit. Discourage subsidized parking for residents or commuters.

*Implementation Actions:*

- a) [s] [n] Develop condition language that requires rental properties in site plan developments to unbundle the price of parking from the cost of housing.
- b) [s] [n] Include condition language that discourages subsidized parking for residents or commuters.

Ensure Adequate Parking Supply

**Policy 6:** Ensure that minimum parking needs are met and excessive parking is not built. Divert resources saved by reducing excess off-street parking to other community benefits.

*Implementation Actions:*

- a) [s] [o] Determine the ideal parking ratios for commercial buildings and update required/recommended building parking requirements in the zoning ordinance where appropriate.
  - i. The zoning ordinance must be updated as appropriate to better match parking requirements with the actual parking demand for office buildings in the Metrorail corridors going through the site plan review process. The required/recommended parking ratios in the zoning ordinance largely date from the 1970s and need to be updated taking into account the changes in the built environment and the investments in TDM and transit service. The result of these changes has been a reduction in the number of commutes by single-occupant vehicles with an increasing number of commuters by mass transit and other trips on foot and bicycles.
  - ii. The ideal parking ratio for a commercial building depends on a number of factors including the planned capacity of surrounding streets, range of transportation options in the area, existing and proposed land uses, and environment-friendly goals. A methodology for balancing these factors with the ideal parking ratios will be developed to guide negotiations for site plan conditions.
  - iii. In addition to a minimum parking requirement, a maximum parking requirement will be developed to prevent the construction of excessive parking. This will result in a range of acceptable parking requirements that take into account other site plan conditions as appropriate.

- b) [s] [o] Allow developers to meet parking requirements through off-site parking agreements.
- c) [s] [n] Evaluate the appropriateness of using a range or maximums to define parking requirements for zoning districts.

**Policy 12:** Provide opportunities for off-site parking provision in commercial centers through the establishment of programs in which a property owner pays a fee to the County or another parking provider in lieu of providing all required spaces on-site.

*Implementation Actions:*

- a) [s] [o?] Develop a program for developers to pay in-lieu fees instead of building parking.
  - i. The County will evaluate setting up a program for collecting in-lieu fees from developers who prefer to defer building parking spaces for their building. This program (similar to that established through the Columbia Pike Form Based Code) will allow consolidation of parking which will help to manage the spaces better and lower the parking requirement.
- b) [m] [n] Evaluate required/recommended parking requirements for residential buildings.

Encourage use of environmentally sustainable modes

**Policy 8:** Allow reduced parking space requirements for new development in close proximity to frequent transit service and exemplary access by non-motorized travel modes and car-sharing vehicles. Require enhanced TDM measures for developments to cooperate with each other to meet off-street parking requirements.

*Implementation Actions:*

- a) [n] [o] Continue within the site plan process to allow reduced parking space requirements for new development in close proximity to frequent transit service and exemplary access by non-motorized travel modes and car-sharing vehicles.
- b) [n] [o] Develop condition language for the TDM or the Parking Management Plan sections of Site Plans that will require developments to cooperate with each other to meet off-street parking requirements.
- c) [s] [n] Encourage parking cash-out of all office tenants in site plan building conditions.

**Policy 11:** Reduce or eliminate parking requirements for specialized projects near transit nodes when they advance related County transportation goals, such as lowering the cost of transit-proximate housing dedicated to those who cannot afford a private vehicle, making available underground space for a new subway entrance, or adding retail amenities to a transit stop. Tailor TDM measures for such projects appropriately.

*Implementation Actions:*

- a) [s] [n] Develop guiding principles for public garage ownership and management in the future.
- b) [l] [n] Evaluate how price of parking affects travel behavior.

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[o] Ongoing    [n] New                      [s] Short term                      [m] Medium term                      [l] Long term

Taking the System to a New Level – what policies do these actions relate to?

- a) [s] [n] Develop a comprehensive and progressive Parking Plan using state of the art practices and technologies to help full implementation of these policies, optimal usage of parking as an element of the County's development, and monitor ongoing operations. The plan would address how global warming, energy prices, changing economic conditions, traffic congestion and other challenges to a sustainable quality of life may require radically different ways of thinking and approaches to storing vehicles.
- b) [m] [n] Develop a public outreach and awareness campaign to rebrand parking as an important public service, to address perceived lack of parking and to better communicate parking options and prices in congested areas.
  - i. An awareness campaign is required to adequately communicate the on- and off-street parking options in congested areas, including the Metrorail corridors. By clearly documenting the number of parking spaces available to the public at various locations, the campaign can not only address the perceived lack of parking in the County, but also reduce congestion by allowing motorists to quickly and efficiently navigate to a preferred parking space without circling and hunting for spaces. Information must be available to the motorist before they get into the car (through websites, brochures, mailings, etc.), as well as after they reach the location in the car (through signage).
- c) [m] [n] Evaluate the appropriate organizational structure for managing our parking.
- d) [l] [n] Develop a comprehensive pricing structure that coordinates off-street and on-street parking
- e) [l] [n] Use web-based technology - for communicating availability of on-street parking, facilitate better sharing of off-street spaces, and management of all spaces.
- f) [m] [n] Evaluate the appropriateness of a parking tax on non-residential garages to generate revenue for transportation infrastructure.

**Performance Measures:**

- Track occupancy levels by block in metro corridors on annual basis (sample).
- Track and analyze trends in tickets issued in permit parking zones & other restricted parking areas.
- Document rates and hours of all public parking garages in metro corridors.
- Track usage within private and public garages to identify fluctuations in parking demand, rates & efficiency of garages (sample).