



**CITY OF NEWARK  
DELAWARE**

April 27, 2018

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Planning Commission

**FROM:** Mary Ellen Gray, AICP, Planning and Development Director *ME Gray*

**VIA:** Frank McIntosh, Planning Commissioner and Chair of Parking Subcommittee

**RE:** Parking Subcommittee Report

Please find attached the Parking Subcommittee Report to Planning Commission, for discussion at the May 1, 2018 Planning Commission meeting.

Thank you.

MEG/mv

**Parking Sub-Committee Report to Planning Commission  
May 1, 2018**

**Prepared by: Frank McIntosh, Chair**

The proposal developed by the committee was arrived at by careful and dutiful review of the many different aspects of parking as it relates to the City of Newark and its citizens. The committee was mindful of finances, environment, quality of life and above all, what was in the best interests of the city's present and long-term interests.

It became quickly obvious that parking is an issue that is both personal and economic. Furthermore, parking is an overarching piece of the city's viability and ability to attract quality businesses and visitors.

To that end the committee understood that we could not produce a list of issues and attendant solutions unless they were integrated and overlapped. Accepting this as true, we took a holistic approach to parking. Our solutions move between and among the identified issues.

The package is designed to be applied in its totality and implemented over time. As such, it becomes the strength of the plan and requires both the patience to see it through and the commitment to appreciate the accumulative effect of its component parts.

The committee sees Newark as a vibrant, walkable city drawing on the highly diverse nature of its permanent and temporary citizens. Vibrant means there are multiplicity of activities, diverse in nature that appeal to our citizens and visitors. Newark is more than the University and all its culture. Having said that, the University is also an important piece of our vibrancy and we need to recognize and embrace what it offers to our city. And, because we want to walk or bike around our downtown area safely and in comfort, does not mean that we don't want people to use automobiles to get here; it means we want to be careful about where those vehicles are located once they arrive at Main Street.

Effective parking solutions are integral to the success of this vision. As with any complex issue, there can be and likely will be disruption of what we have become used to in favor of what changing times and vision of what can become the future.

The committee was designed to embrace the potential of the future of Newark; it was designed to think boldly and without partisan interest. There were no limitations to the depth or breadth of thinking. We agreed that the challenges that really good thinking produces would be dealt with on the merit of the idea after we put the plan together.

The committee included the following:

- Jordan Abada, Student – University of Delaware
- Rob Cappiello, Business Manager – United Methodist Church
- Mary Ellen Gray, Director Planning Department – City of Newark

- Mike Fortner, Planner II – City of Newark
- Will Hurd, Planning Commissioner
- Chris Locke, General Counsel and Partner, Lang Development
- Frank McIntosh, Planning Commissioner
- Lee Mikles, Owner, Grain Craft Bar + Kitchen
- Richard Rind, Director, Auxiliary Services – University of Delaware
- Alan Silverman, Planning Commissioner

These individuals represented the various stakeholders of Newark’s downtown business district. They were carefully selected because of their understanding of the issues, ability to think globally, and commitment to the betterment of the city’s future.

The committee was resourced by city employees from both Planning, Parking and IT. These staff include: Michelle Vispi, Administrative Staff, Planning and Development Department; Marvin Howard, Parking Manager, Parking Division; Courtney Mulvanity, Parking Supervisor, Parking Division; and Jay Hodny, GIS Technician, Public Works and Water Resources Department. Their participation in the meetings and as resource with information, maps, and collective intelligence played a major role in our ability to zero in on the actual issues and develop solutions that are workable.

Additionally, the public was invited to participate in the committee’s meetings by joining our breakout groups and giving their input directly within that critical stage of issue and idea development. The public was always allowed to question and comment during our process and it was the opinion of the committee that we gained greatly from their participation.

From a work standpoint, we needed to see the big picture. Thus, we started by building a list of all possible issues that might impact parking, positively or negatively. We listened to our committee members as they discussed the impact of parking on their area of influence. We listened to information provided by city resources and public comments on the subject. We then compiled a list of potential problems and using Survey Monkey rank ordered the issues that were preventing progress.

One of the major *take a ways* from this process was the persistence of the parking debate in the City of Newark. For all practical purposes this issue has been bantered about since the mid-eighties when the Newark Parking Authority was formed to solve the problem once and for all. On the surface, this knowledge presented a dilemma for us. The committee members were not used to losing or being unable to drive solutions.

Therefore, it was incumbent upon each member to be sure that their contribution to the effort needed to go beyond representing their particular interest group. Because of their talent in problem solving, they recognized that effective solutions designed to succeed over time could only be realized by thinking beyond their special interest. Success would be achieved by focusing

on the interests of the City, now and into the future. If the City grows and prospers, the groups they represent within will also prosper.

It was a delight to notice the change, ever so slightly in the discourse among both the committee members and the public. Quickly, the commitment to the greater good took hold.

The tools we used to flush out the issues and develop solutions included small group work, presentation of findings of these groups, followed by the whole group offering upgrades to the small group product. Once the issues were identified and agreed upon and the solutions developed and agreed upon, we took the discussion a step further by examining capacity.

Capacity assessment tells us whether or not we can do the job with existing resources. If not, it gives us an understanding of the gap that exists and provides the opportunity to assess what has to be done to close the gap. It also tells us when this may happen so that we can plan effective implementation of the plan.

Matrixes were developed to help us understand the interrelationship of the issues and solutions. Not surprisingly, we discovered that the dynamic of the plan was relational in nature. The pieces of the plan interacted with each other and were dependent upon each other to succeed.

While this presents its own challenges, the silver lining is a plan, so structured, becomes a stronger plan as its component parts support each other.

As implementation is not the purview of the committee, we suggested that the Planning Department begin to develop operational strategies to enact the solutions. While this is a work in progress, the committee has reviewed and commented on the strategies as they have been presented to us. In this fashion we are providing guidance to staff regarding our thinking on best practices.

We have made it clear that it is the responsibility of the staff to implement. They are the professionals and working with them over the past six months or so, it is clear to the committee that they are fully capable of getting the job done effectively. The committee thinks that it is inappropriate for us to dictate to professionals how to do their job. Our role is to make sure that staff understands what we mean regarding solutions and to offer advice as to how to accomplish the tasks.

So then, with this as background in mind, what did we decide was getting in our way and how were we going to set a new path that would put the city on a track to become a vibrant and viable location? A location that is inviting to families and businesses, to students and professors, to neighbors and organizations. Newark is a place that promotes walkability, biking and healthy living.

## ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

We identified seven major issues that needed to be addressed in order to resolve real or perceived parking problems in the downtown area.

As an example, the committee wrestled with the concept of what a parking problem means. To some people it means, if I can't park in front of the bank, there is a problem. To an individual who holds this view or one that it similar, the only option is to change the mindset.

Another concern is the perception that there is a parking problem in Newark, particularly when students are on campus. For our neighbors in surrounding communities and states, this perception often leads to the decision to seek shopping or entertainment elsewhere. The effect is not dissimilar to Wilmington's crime issue where people often make the decision to forego city based cultural and shopping opportunities because of safety concerns.

The conclusion of the committee was that if we resolved the identified issues, any others would be eliminated or fall in line and become non-issues.

Below are the strategic issues the committee identified. Let me emphasize that they are not ranked ordered. We think of them as being like a family. If there is a serious issue within a family, it effects each member of the family in way or another. Solutions must address the main issue and the collateral issues it spawns. You can't cherry pick one solution over another regardless of the reasoning without creating discord. When this occurs, there are no solutions at all.

- CULTURAL THINKING AROUND PARKING
- PARKING DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY AT CERTAIN TIMES OF THE DAY
- ZONING CODE (SUBURBAN VERSUS URBAN PARKING STANDARDS)
- STORM WATER
- EMPLOYEE PARKING
- INDEPENDENT, PRIVATE LOTS THAT ARE NOT PART OF THE CITY NETWORK
- ECONOMICS OF PARKING

Solutions will cross over from one issue to another. The solutions will be presented as to the actual action required and then reviewed as to how much of a gap exists between ready implementation and longer term. The gap analysis will take into account money and other resources against the availability of same.

- CULTURAL THINKING AROUND PARKING

This is an overarching issue. A comprehensive marketing plan must be developed, most likely with the help of an outside resource. It must show a city that is on the move addressing any parking issues that exist, promoting changes made to locations and convenience of parking. It

must quell the idea that it is difficult to find parking in Newark. The plan will support all the other issues that we identify.

- PARKING DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY AT CERTAIN TIMES OF THE DAY

We will create a Downtown parking app to assist travelers in finding parking within the city. Through a GIS map it will show the geographic availability of spaces in real time. There will be wayfinding signage which includes availability of parking at all lots.

The fees for downtown parking lots will be consistent with UD lots, particularly in Lot 1 (Galleria). Lots 3 and 4 can be lower but do not have to be. Reduction of downtown parking requirements will provide better utilized building and also increase the taxable income to the city.

- ZONING CODE (SUBURBAN VERSUS URBAN PARKING STANDARDS)

There will be parking districts with different parking requirements. There will be de-coupling of parking for the multi-family development.

- STORM WATER

Changes to the zoning code will reduce the number of private small lots thus improving storm water quality. Development of small private lots for single locations will be highly discouraged.

- EMPLOYEE PARKING

Outer lots, either University or private, will be used for employee parking, which will have the effect of providing more parking for visitors. A circular downtown bus route will be used to transport employees from lots to various business locations.

- INDEPENDENT, PRIVATE LOTS THAT ARE NOT PART OF THE CITY NETWORK

University and off time private lots will be used to increase additional public parking supply. The zoning codes will be reviewed to identify and fix impediments to creative parking solutions.

- ECONOMICS OF PARKING

The above examples of issues and solutions demonstrate how an integrated plan can benefit our city, eliminating parking issues, laying the ground work for viable, livable, walkable, bikeable city. Specific details will be contained within the formal presentation.

In order for this plan to work we must open our minds to the potential of our city as we address current needs and open the door to future development.