



New Haven Redevelopment Agency
165 Church Street, New Haven, CT 06510

Kelly Murphy
Executive Director

Jorge Lopes, Chairman
John DeStefano, Jr., Mayor

Minutes
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, October 28, 2008
City Hall Meeting Room#3
165 Church Street
New Haven, Connecticut 06510

DRAFT MINUTES

PRESENT:

Commissioners

Daisy Abreu
Jorge Lopes
Fred Marez

Staff

Tony Bialecki
Christine Bonanno

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:14 PM

1. Draft Report on Findings from Downtown Parking Survey

Tony Bialecki presented the draft report of the Downtown Parking Survey Update #3. The Downtown parking study began in 2003 as development in area began to pick up. The City of New Haven and the New Haven Parking Authority (NHPA) partnered to hire Wilbur Smith Associates to study parking availability, analyze parking districts and make recommendations for utilization. As a follow up, in 2004 as part of the Gateway College planning, the Office of Economic Development, NHPA, the Board of Education, Traffic & Parking and others doing projects, took the Wilbur Smith study and looked at other projects in the pipeline to see how their magnitude and schedule affected the downtown parking supply. The Board of Alderman were concerned that the putting the college downtown would create a parking crunch that would negatively affect the rest of the area. The 2004 study became known as the Detailed Plan. The study identified an inventory of lots, number of spaces, projects in the pipeline and lots scheduled to come off line. A model was created to calculate parking availability and usage. Each update in 2007 and 2008 used the same model and calculated usage based on information provided regarding information taken from a snapshot in time survey, new projects, new lots and lots removed from the system. The original Plan as well as the updates will be sent to the commissioners.

Update #3 took a snap shot of usage and availability on Wednesday in September between 11 AM and 2 PM. The time was chosen since Wednesday is traditionally the day for the highest usage, midday is the peak of usage and September is the busiest month because school and Yale are back in session. Staff from ED, NHPA and TT&P walked every garage counting the number of spaces and the numbers of cars parked. TT&P staff also countered the number of metered street spaces and their usage. The study area was broken out into four districts:

Gateway/Ninth Square, Financial, South/West Chapel and Broadway. Union Station was included because a large number users taking up spaces in downtown are actually commuters. The draft found that there are 13,875 available spaces, 11,773 used spaces calculated to be an 85% utilization rate.

Commissioner Maretz asked if the same garage was counted at the same time every year. Mr. Bialecki responded, that yes, the methodology of the study requires that the garages are counted at the same time to be able to show utilization over time.

Mr. Bialecki distributed analysis charts of the findings. Update #3 finds that though there are no new garages, there is a slight increase in capacity because of the Coliseum surface lot even though the Shartenberg site and other small lots have been taken out of service for development. Chapel District and the Gateway/Ninth Square District have a slight increase in the number of cars parked while both the Broadway and Financial district had a slight decrease. Overall, utilization rates dropped slightly from 87% to 85%. Analysis shows that there are several factors contributing to the drop including rising fuel prices, increase in Shoreline East and other public transportation and relocations of parkers due to development in the Medical District.

Overall, Update #3 shows that downtown is not experiencing parking crunch at this time and we still have a healthy capacity of parking for growth. We will continue to monitor each year as projects are completed (360 State) and as lots come out of service (Coliseum surface lot for development).

Mr. Bialecki noted that Economic Development, Long Wharf Theater and Northland have begun to meet to discuss the project at the former Coliseum site. Update #3 provides important information to inform those negotiations. The Coliseum lot is primarily being used by overflow parkers using Union Station and employees of Yale New Haven Hospital who are shuttled to the Medical District. When the Coliseum lot comes out of service, the YNHH parkers will go to their new garage at 2 Howe Street (Lot E). Union Station commuters will need to be accommodated at new facility at Union Station. Commissioner Maretz noted that Update #3 clearly demonstrates the urgency of building a new garage at Union Station. Christine Bonanno noted that the City and the NHPA continue to work with the State of CT Departments of Transportation, Economic and Community Development and Policy and Management to emphasize the urgent need for a transit oriented development at Union Station that includes two new parking facilities and new mixed used development with its own parking. The first of the two new garages needs to be completed by 2012, the projected year for Gateway College to open, taking spaces from the Temple Street garage currently used by commuters, and the anticipated completion date for the Long Wharf Theater on the former Coliseum site.

Mr. Bialecki clarified that the study only included publicly available lots. Lots used for an exclusive purpose, like those operated by Yale, were not included. Chairman Lopes was surprised by the sheer number of lots in the area. Mr. Bialecki informed the commissioners that TT&P will be following up this study with a joint effort with the South Central Region Council of Governments analyzing pedestrian and bike access. The Street Smarts campaign kick off emphasizes the increased volume of pedestrians and cyclists in New Haven. Commissioner Maretz asked where the bikes park. Parking for bikes has grown in demand and garages are adapting to provide bicycle parking and storage as well as shower facilities.

2. Other

Christine Bonanno gave an update on the progress of the numerous projects taking place in Science Park, part of the Newhallville Renewal Plan. Yale, the newest tenant at 25 Science Park,

has begun to move staff into the new office space. About 600 employees will be based at 25 Science Park. Yale's presence helps Winstanley Enterprises market the space by projecting a positive, safe and bustling environment. It also creates a critical mass of people, along with existing tenant, Higher One, to open a lunch restaurant on the first floor. Site work and remediation has begun on the site of the future garage/commercial/ retail building across the street. Demolition of the two buildings on Tract B2 is scheduled to begin next week. Forest City and the Science Park Development Corporation are continuing their negotiations around the old factory building on Tract A. Forest City has an exciting proposal for rental housing, retail and commercial space that will maintain the historic structures. Finally, Winstanley Enterprises is about to close on the former USRAC site. The proposed new use will be commercial, printing press and maintenance facilities, all permitted uses in the Municipal Development Plan. Winstanley Enterprises plans to submit for detailed site plan review at City Plan Commission in December as well as for necessary approvals from the Development Commission and the Redevelopment Agency.

3. Approval of Minutes

A quorum now present (Commissioner Abreu entered during Mr. Bialecki's presentation), Chairman Lopes asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2008 meeting. A motion was made and seconded, and all members voted to approve the minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 PM.