CITY CENTER PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN

2025

City of South Burlington

Report Title:

City Center Parking Management Plan

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Report Prepared for:

The City of South Burlington and Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The City Center's long-held vision is being realized. Undeveloped and underdeveloped properties are developing into a downtown. City Center is increasing neighborhood connectivity with new walkable and bikeable cross streets and by creating places for community to be. As City Center is transforming into a true downtown, for the first time South Burlington has on-street parking, street-facing retail, outdoor restaurant seating, and residential apartments that charge separately for parking (unbundled parking). The continued success of City Center depends on the City's ability to manage parking availability to reduce the amount of land it uses while maximizing accessibility and efficiency.

A Parking Management Plan seeks to manage the supply of vehicle parking to support the continued success of City Center. This Plan considers the area along and between Dorset Street and Hinesburg Road, north of Williston Road, and southward to just north of San Remo Drive, as shown in Figure 1.

What's in the Plan?

The Parking Management Plan addresses the key questions:

- Why create a plan?
- What parking will be included in the plan?
- How will those spaces be managed?

The Plan appendices include background materials that informed the development of the Plan and the Plan's key management recommendations:

- Inventory of existing parking spaces.
- Observations of how parking is currently used.

- A forecast of future parking needs.
- Strategies for managing parking fairly and efficiently.
- Input from schools, businesses, landowners, residents, and city staff.

FIGURE 1: STUDY AREA

Source: RSG

1.2 PARKING MANAGEMENT GOALS

Parking in City Center South Burlington should provide efficient vehicle access to the businesses, homes, and activities in City Center and support a vibrant and active streetscape. The following goals were established for the Parking Management Plan:

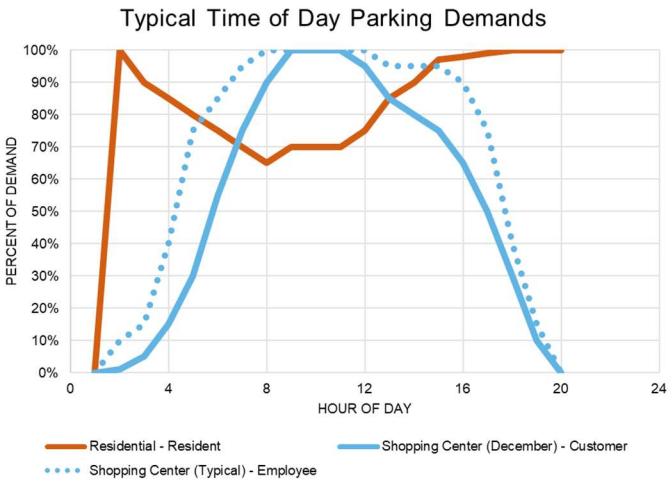
- Enable visitors to 'park once' with safe and attractive options to walk to, rather than drive, to another destination City Center.
- Support continued development and re-development of City Center and including the Williston Road corridor and San Remo Drive.
- Respond to changes in parking patterns, demand, sensitivity to prices, and South Burlington residents' and visitors' concerns.
- Operate in a fiscally responsible manner with minimal outside support (i.e. limit the use General Fund dollars raised from property taxes).

Success in meeting these parking management goals should be monitored and the management approach adjusted as required. These goals should also be revisited from time to time to confirm they still meet the community's needs.

1.3 MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Specific strategies to meet the parking management goals that will make parking work better for everyone include the following:

- Time Limits: Prevent longer term parking (such as all-day) from occupying high demand on-street spaces and busy lots near destinations.
- Paid Parking: Introduce fees in high-demand areas such as on-street and near destinations to prioritize availability for visitors and other short term users (reduce all-day parking in premium spaces).
- Shared Parking: Establish a public system of signage, enforcement and pricing across lots (whether publicly owned and contracted with) for more efficient use of parking by complementary uses, whether public or private.



The concept of shared parking is visualized in the chart – showing an increase in commercial demand during the day when residential demand reduces which allows the residential lot to be shared by commercial users during this time.

- Monitoring & Adjustment: Use data to refine policies over time.
- Options for walking: Create attractive pathways that are safe and inviting connecting the many destinations in City Center.
- Improve surrounding non-vehicular travel options: Encourage the use of alternatives to driving from surrounding areas to reduce overall parking demand.

1.4 PLAN BACKGROUND

The parking demand in South Burlington's City Center is growing and changing, and will be driven by a variety of users, including employers and employees, residents, restaurant patrons, shoppers, City Hall users, senior center and library patrons, and visitors for special events. All users will be seeking convenient on- and off-street parking.

In response, the City sought funding through the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission's (CCRPC) Unified Planning Work Program to study the issue. The purpose of a parking management plan is to comprehensively balance parking supply and demand, particularly in a downtown or mixed-use area. The project included evaluating the City's existing parking inventory and the anticipated future demands and supply of parking in the City Center. This plan documents data collection, stakeholder engagement, and management recommendations based on feedback from city staff, research on peer and regional communities, and City Center stakeholders. Recommendations and strategies for the parking management plan cover operational aspects of implementation such as paid parking technology, time limits, and enforcement.

A previous Parking & Movement Plan was conducted in August 2020 that included comprehensive parking occupancy data in the study area along with a range of short-, mid-, to long-term strategies to optimize parking capacity. This study builds on the outcomes and conclusions from that study by focusing on the recent land use changes, implementing paid parking, and identifying how parking can be managed.

2.0 PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN

2.1 WHY CREATE A PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN?

A Parking Management Plan (PMP) is a strategic approach used by municipalities and institutions to organize and regulate parking resources in a way that supports broader transportation, land use, and environmental goals. Rather than simply *adding more parking* spaces, a well-designed plan considers how to use existing spaces more efficiently. It provides methods to encourage vehicle turnover to ensure vehicle access to key destinations. By making space available where people need them, it reduces traffic congestion. Finally, a plan reduces demand by encouraging alternative modes of transportation such as walking, biking, and public transit. A PMP involves data collection on parking demand and supply, analysis of user behavior, and the development of policies such as pricing, time limits, permit systems, and enforcement strategies.

Did you know?
There are over ***10,000 parking spaces*** within a 15-minute walk of City Hall, including on-street spots, surface lots, and garages. However, usage varies widely. Some areas are nearly full during peak times, while others remain mostly empty. Activities in the City Center are changing and parking demands fluctuate during the year. This plan identifies opportunities to leverage the available spaces to meet current and expected future needs of residents and visitors to City Center.

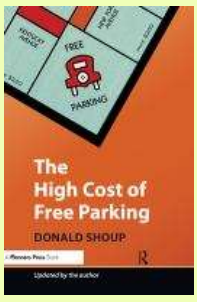
PMPs are used in downtown areas as a tool to balance land use density, access to key destinations, and the physical space required for vehicles. By aligning parking policies with community goals—like reducing greenhouse gas emissions, supporting local businesses, expanding multimodal transportation options, and improving pedestrian safety—parking management plans help create more livable and sustainable environments.

PMPs also need to consider equity concerns by ensuring that parking access is fair and that all users, including residents and visitors with financial constraints or mobility restrictions, have options. **Ultimately, a parking management plan is not just about cars—it's about how space is shared and used in a way that benefits the entire community.**

Professor Donald Shoup authored the seminal book on parking management:

"The High Cost of Free Parking".

He popularized the 85% parking occupancy rate to maximize the efficiency of the street network.



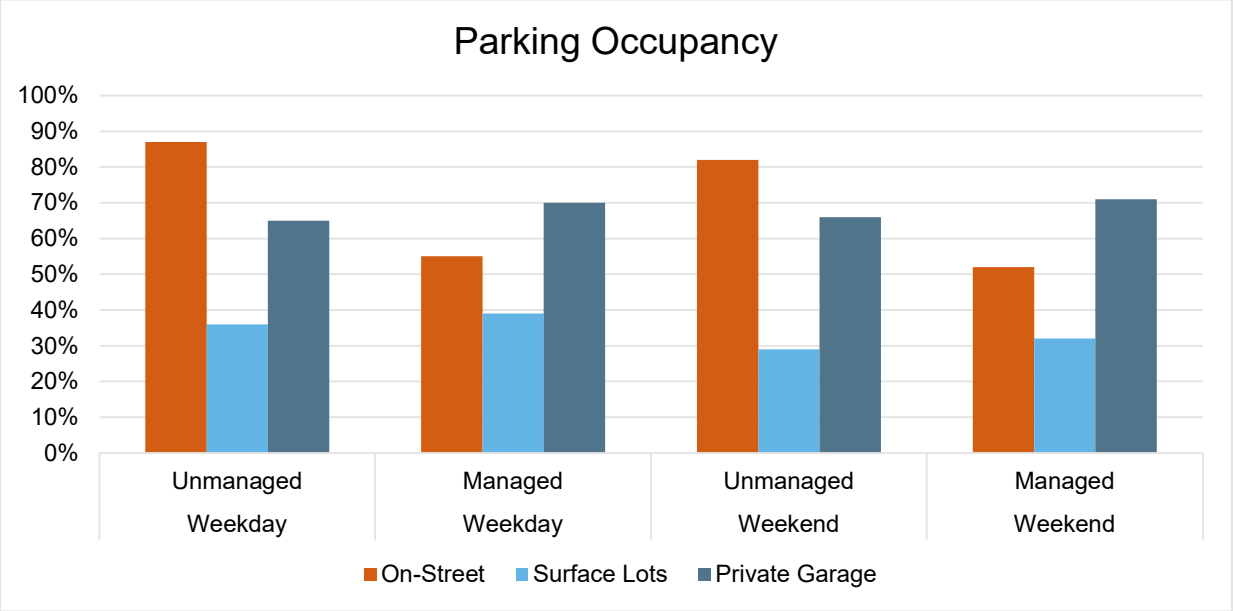
This parking management plan uses an 85% occupancy rate as an operational target. The 85% occupancy rate suggests that for every 10 spaces, between 1 and 2 spaces would be open for parking. By **having at least 1 space open on each block (~10 spaces)** the need for vehicles to circle the block to find an open parking space is reduced and driver frustration is minimized.

On-street parking along Market Street

An analysis of parking demand in City Center suggests that in the absence of a management plan highly desirable on-street parking spaces in front of residences and businesses may not be available for one-to-two-hour parking needs. Instead, they would be occupied by vehicles parked for many hours or days that could be moved to other, less-in-demand lots designated for longer-term parking needs.

Figure 2 shows the anticipated parking occupancy for on-street spaces, surface parking lots, and private garages in an unmanaged vs managed scenario.

FIGURE 2: PROJECTED AVERAGE DAILY PARKING OCCUPANCY



The City Center PMP attempts to balance multiple objectives:

- Businesses: want consistent guidance and easy access for customers.
- Library and Senior Center: want proximate affordable options.
- Residents and employees: require long-term parking that is affordable and meets their access needs.
- Schools and private property owners: need safe and organized parking to meet access needs and minimize conflicts between users.

The management approach is split into phases, to accommodate the timeline and stages of development as well as to allow time for a progressive introduction of paid parking in the community. The first phase creates time-limited, paid parking options for on-street parking and select lots in City Center. Future phases could expand the number of parking spaces managed, change costs, change time limits, or alter restrictions.

2.2 WHAT PARKING WILL BE MANAGED?

The first phase recommendation is to create time-limited, paid on-street parking near Market Street including:

- On-street spaces along Market Street, Garden Street, Datillio Drive, and Mary Street.
- Off-street spaces at 155 Market Street and the Public Library and City Hall lot.
- Paid parking enforced from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week.
- Short-term spaces (1-2 additional) for quick visits and pickups.
- On-street parking available for free overnight, from 8pm until 8am.
- Costs of paid parking will start at $1 per hour plus applicable transaction fees.

The Managed Parking shown in Figure 3 includes 203 on-street spaces, the 40 spaces managed by the City at 155 Market Street, and 30 spaces in the Public Library and City Hall lot.

FIGURE 3: PHASE 1 MANAGED PARKING SUPPLY (273 SPACES)

2.3 HOW WILL PARKING BE MANAGED?

On-Street Management Approach

On-street parking spaces typically provide the closest access to key destinations in City Center and are expected to be in high demand. Parking management best practice recommends using 85% occupancy rate as a target occupancy rate, and suggests that for every 10 spaces, between 1 and 2 spaces would be open for parking. Having at least 1 vehicle parking space open on each block (~10 spaces) minimizes the need for a vehicle to circle the block to find an unoccupied parking space.

The 203 on-street spaces are expected to be part of the routine day-to-day parking management. The recommended initial period for paid parking is between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.

TABLE 1: PHASE 1 ON-STREET MANAGED SPACES (8 A.M. – 8 P.M.)

	Total Spaces	Restricted/ Designated Spaces
Market Street (excluding 17 spaces east of City Center Park)	115	2 – 15 min loading zone spaces for Pickup/Dropoff, Loading (in front of 224 Market St. 1 – 15 min space in front of 180 Market Stret (City Hall)
Garden Street	65	Up to 1 – 15 min spaces for Pickup/Dropoff south and north of Market Street.
Datillio Drive (north of Market Street)	11	None
Mary Street (block north of Market Street)	12	none

Off-Street Parking Lot Approach

There is an extensive supply of privately owned and managed off-street parking. Integration of these lots into a unified parking system is key to providing a convenient, accessible, “park once” experience for visitors and other users. These lots require additional considerations and analysis given the various mix of land uses, diverse ownership, fluctuating demands during weekdays and weekends, as well as seasonal demands (e.g., school).

Ideally, any visitor to City Center will find a parking space that works for them by following clear, consistent signage and online guidance. The goal is to ensure all possible parking options are similarly signed and branded and can be paid for using the same tools and methods. The parking customer will not need to know whether the parking lot is owned by the public or a private sector or tied to a specific destination. Creating unified parking across the City Center area for visitors, employees, and residents will greatly reduce confusion and driving from lot to lot. Adoption of this management philosophy will benefit the private and public parking lot owners and provide a high-quality parking experience in City Center for visitors, tenants, employees and residents.

The first phase of managed parking incorporates two off-street lots: the City Hall/ Senior Center/ Library lot and a subset of spaces in the 155 Market Street lot (opposite City Hall). Depending on private owner interest, other private off-street lots can be considered.

Public Library and City Hall – 180 Market Street [City of South Burlington]

- Operates as a paid parking lot for the 30 spaces available
- Enforced seven days a week

- Managed using parking codes or other mechanism for price-sensitive patrons of the building such as users of the Public Library and Senior Center

155 Market Street [private lot]

A private lot that will be partially managed by the City.

- The 40 City leased spaces will require payment and will be managed like the Public Library and City Hall lot. Parking lot striping using specific colors and signs will enable the City to manage the spaces. City vehicles and building patrons may be provided with codes or permits to use those spaces.
- The remaining 70+ spaces will remain under the management of the owner of the private lot. It is possible that some or all of these spaces can also be managed as part of the paid lot upon agreement with the owner. Authorized users related to the commercial building and their patrons may be provided with codes, permits, as per any agreement.

Monitoring & Evaluation

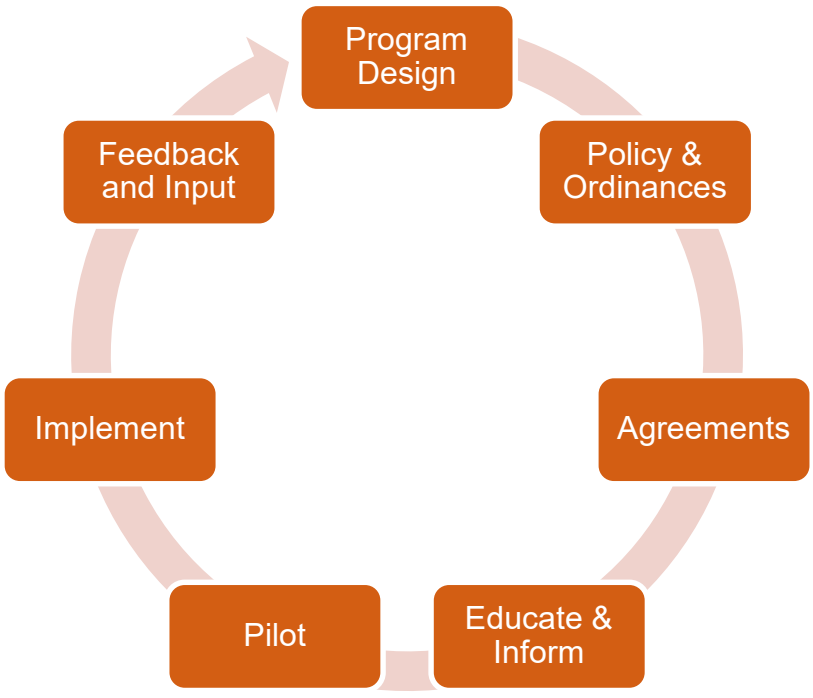
Managed parking requires frequent monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment. The following should be monitored as part of the Phase 1 management approach:

- On-Street parking availability. Ideally, achieve at least 1 parking space available at all times (85% percentile occupancy). Balance cost, time limit maximums, reserved and dedicated parking spaces. Evaluate the daily patterns of parking demand, especially for on-street.
- Effectiveness of Off-Street Management. Collecting occupancy counts, violations, and assessment as to whether unaffiliated users are incorrectly parking, spaces are efficiently used, pricing and other tools are achieving the desired goals as set out in the lot agreement.

- Violations: Time Exceeded or Unpaid Parking. Assess the degree to which violations vs paid parking is generating revenue. It may require adjusting the maximum parking time per transaction. Evaluate the public's understanding of signage and the effectiveness of public education on parking compliance/reducing violations.
- Revenue and Costs. Achieving a parking department that can use paid parking revenues and violation revenues to cover the costs of enforcement.
- Experiences of community. Solicit input from the wider community as well as the individuals and organizations that are impacted and stand to benefit from managed parking. This may be directly or through a parking commission or board.

As shown in Figure 4, the management approach would follow a continuous improvement cycle. This management plan sets out the program design with the next step establishing the authority to enforce parking through policy and ordinance updates. Establishing agreements with private lots and other partners will be next step if part of the initial phase. After that, the City will need to work with the community to educate and inform them of how to access parking. This starts with signage, setting expectations, providing answers to questions, and providing resources. A pilot phase can be used to test management routines and evaluate them. Formal implementation will be followed by continual feedback and input to monitor how the goals are being achieved through successful parking management activities.

FIGURE 4: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CYCLE



Future Phases of Managed Parking

The managed parking supply in the City Center is expected to change over time, adapting to the demand for parking. In the near-term, close-in private parking lots should be evaluated for their potential role in the management of parking supply in the City Center. The following lots are likely to experience greater demand for parking as on-street parking and public lot options require payment to park in peak hours. While each lot is unique as to the land uses surrounding it and the typical users they serve, they are also similar that they may have flexibility to provide parking options.

Upon negotiation and execution of a lease with the private lot property owners, these lots may contribute to the overall parking system as:

- Additional visitor parking,
- Longer-term (day) parking for employees in the area, or
- Overflow lots during peak times of the year and for events.

How a lot may contribute and benefit from being integrated into the system depends upon private owner needs and location.

Participation in the parking management system may provide benefits to private owners, depending upon their lot, such as more options for customer parking, lease revenue, enforcement, off-site employee parking, and off-site event parking.

Ultimately, the more private lots that participate in the parking management system, the more the public will be allowed to “park once” to conduct all their downtown errands, experiencing seamless, convenient parking in the downtown.

Delta Hotel [private]

The Delta Hotel along Williston Road includes informal connections to the Judge/DMV lot and Mary Street. The hotel includes a restaurant and conference functions.

An estimated 270 surface parking spaces are available for the hotel. The peak demand for parking is estimated to be well below that, leaving room for sharing with other nearby users, overflow from other lots, and peak event management.

As a conference/ballroom space, the hotel itself hosts events and could benefit from the use of other lots during events as part of a shared parking system.

Future phase recommendation:

- Use for off-site event parking
- Use for all day parking for area employees such as city or school district staff.

Central School [School District]

The school district lot could provide opportunities for paid parking during off-school hours such as evenings, or summer hours when one or both lots are underutilized, depending upon school programming.

Future phase recommendation:

- During typical weekdays the lot should be restricted for authorized users only.
- Use signage specifying restrictions and the period (such as authorized users only weekdays 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. August – June) to communicate who may use the parking spaces and when.
- Outside of the hours when parking is restricted to school use, consider a lease to operate as a paid parking lot open to visitors. Permits and/or special user codes are tools to keep the parking free for pre-authorized users during these times.

Blue Mall – Market Street lot [private]

The lot along Market Street is an opportunity to provide day-long parking needs for a variety of users. It currently operates as an overflow lot for most of the Blue Mall uses, but also is the closest lot to a handful of Blue Mall tenants and convenient to many customers. This lot faces pressure from non-affiliated users as the most accessible off-street parking with two entrances on Market Street (a central location in the downtown). In a shared parking arrangement, customers at Blue Mall destinations may also combine their Blue Mall lunch or shopping trip with a visit to public resources such as the library without being required to move their car.

Future phase recommendation:

- Obtain a lease to operate this lot as a paid parking lot that is enforced during the same hours as on-street parking (seven days a week).
- Use permits and codes to provide free parking for approved/authorized users associated with the tenants of the Blue Mall.

Catamount Run [private]

The Catamount Run development in City Center has several off-street surface lots with nearly 400 spaces to serve the parking demands for the Catamount Run residents as well as the storefront businesses and their employees and patrons.

The parking model's analysis of the parking demand relative to the parking supply indicates that there will be sufficient surface lot parking for all these users. The storefronts are expected to

lease up over the next year or so. These parking lots are in a prime location behind new on-street storefronts. Some lots are convenient to many public uses. Ideally, customers to businesses in Catamount Run may want to combine lunch or shopping with a visit to the library or other downtown uses without being required to move their car. Also, users may not act as the model predicts. Use of these lots should be monitored as parking demand stabilizes to see if Catamount Run has excess parking available at for other users in some locations or times of the day.

Future phase recommendation:

- Monitor to evaluate opportunities to incorporate into the parking system as public parking or limited permited parking for specific user groups such as employees, event attendees, etc.

Catamount Run has planned for sufficient off-street parking to serve the residents and business tenants that occupy their properties. As City Center matures, it will be desirable to incorporate any excess parking spaces into a unified system to achieve a seamless park-once environment.

Longer-term

Future management of parking in the City Center will need to consider additional parking lots in the study area as well as outside the study area. Expansion of the areas within a managed parking system will be guided by monitoring the parking occupancy for both the on-street and the off-street parking lots. As redevelopment occurs, new parking will need to be evaluated and monitored for how it may contribute to and benefit from the system.

The City should also periodically evaluate the occupancy and parking demand for areas outside of Phase 1 area such as parking lots along San Remo Drive and north of Williston Road (Higher Ground, Zachary's, etc.).

The University Mall has an extensive supply of parking. Historically, it was well utilized during peak times of the year, but more recently the parking demand hasn't been as high. Pending redevelopment, the current parking supply offers the City Center flexibility and opportunities for future parking management strategies to emerge. Various sections are more popular than others and the demand for parking has evolved along with the changes in shopping preferences. University Mall parking lots could be used for event parking, provide shared use

parking capacity for future buildings and infill, and/or or provide day parking for employees such as city or school district staff.

Future phases of the management plan could result in adjustments to parking regulations, adjusting price points, setting up permit options, designating parking zones, and adjusting parking time limits.

The City should consider developing reciprocal agreements to encourage shared parking during events and seek to foster and improve communication and coordination. These agreements along with a process regularly communicate can be an important step in successfully managing parking in the City Center.

2.4 IMPLEMENTING THE PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN

The City Center PMP is a calibrated approach to ensure that parking is available for those who need it and recognizes the different priority users that certain parking spaces have. In the absence of parking management prime on-street spaces are expected to be monopolized during peak times of the day and evening by with residential and employee parking, rather than customers or patrons of the library, city hall or senior center. With time restrictions and a parking fee during peak hours it is expected that residents and employees will choose to shift their parking to less expensive off-street locations, freeing more convenient on-street spaces to meet the shorter visit parking needs of customers and patrons in City Center.

Turning this plan into reality requires a coordinated approach between many stakeholders. The following summarizes many of the actions that will be required:

- **Establish policies, bylaws, and ordinances** pertaining to the ability to enforce time and paid parking restrictions, and give authority to make decisions and direct how they are made.
- **Establish a parking management function** within the city. Hire staff, both back office and enforcement officers to walk the streets, and procure technology vendors. An estimated 2.1 full-time equivalent personnel would be associated with enforcement. These staff, as primarily outdoors on-street, will also play a vital role in communicating with and educating the public. Additional staff time would be required for human resources, staff management, monitoring and analysis, and administration. Maintenance of the kiosks, enforcement technology, and software is expected to be done by existing staff but may require new training.

  Financial scenarios based on of parking demand, the supply of parking being managed, the recommended price and subsequent revenue generation, and operational expenses indicate the system should be revenue neutral. Changing rates, enforcement time

periods and staffing hourly rates, the rates and costs of violations, and externally, the overall parking demand and how it matches supply, are the key drivers influencing the financial outcome of managed parking.

- **Create agreements** with private landowners who may enroll their parking spaces to be managed within the City's system. These agreements will cover liability, maintenance, revenue and cost sharing, exemptions and special events, among other items.
- **Develop a permitting process**. Based on identified needs, a system architecture and policy plan that defines permitting needs and processing within the parking system will need to be established. The PMP sets out the basic needs of permits – through license plates, stickers, physical tags, or parking codes. The payment and enforcement methods will need to be determined. The PMP reviewed several vendors and technologies who each presented unique systems to handle exempting or shifting costs from customers and visitors either temporarily or longer-term.
- **Procure and install equipment**. A smartphone app-based system similar to or the same as surrounding communities is anticipated with options for physical payment at kiosks. Procuring the technology and physical infrastructure such as payment kiosks and signs will need to be completed as a first step followed by installation, along with signage outlining the parking zones on the street and in lots.
- **Conduct outreach** to City Center residents, businesses in the City Center as well as the residents of South Burlington who visit the downtown. Certain businesses or organizations may be eligible to exempt certain users from the parking system, through either codes or permits.
- **Piloting the system**. Set up a beta set of testers to put the system through its paces. The Pilot would test the technology, enforcement approaches, staffing needs, payment and permit processes, and the front end and back-end software. A limited geographic area such as the block or two along Market Street near City Hall could be the first area to evaluate the management strategies.
- **Full implementation**. Phase 1 of the parking system would be fully implemented after thorough testing and successful piloting.
- **On-going monitoring.** Data on parking occupancy across on-street spaces and parking lots in the study area will be collected. It will be important to collect data prior to the implementation of the system and over the weeks and months after implementation. Setting up a working group of engaged stakeholders to provide feedback will be important to respond to urgent issues as well as make recommendations for future evolution and adaptation of the plan.

The proposed integrated parking system will have a data-driven approach to managing access to City Center's parking supply. With data and user input, the parking system will be able to respond to changing demand by flexibly incorporating additional private lots, expanding the area under common management, adjusting prices as necessary, and modifying time limits as needed.

The Parking Management Plan Appendices include details on the inputs and analysis summarized in this document.