

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor England
Vice Mayor Samora
Commissioner George
Commissioner Rummell
Commissioner Torres

FROM: Max Royle, City Manager 

DATE: August 23, 2021

SUBJECT: Public Parking Improvements: Review of Recommendations from the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board and Related Matters

INTRODUCTION

At your May 24, 2021, meeting, you asked the staff to work with the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board to develop a five-year public parking improvements plan. The Board with the Building Official discussed your request at its August 17th meeting and approved several recommendations. They are:

1. That the Commission continue to explore opportunities to increase and improve parking.
2. That no currently green-scaped plazas or plazas be altered for parking.
3. That no public parking improvements be put in residential areas.
4. That the City encourage the County to develop parking along the north side of Pope Road.
5. That the prioritized area for parking improvements be the plazas on the west side of A1A Beach Boulevard between A and 1st Streets in front of Jack's Bar-B-Q.

ATTACHMENTS

Attached for your review is the following information:

- a. Pages 1-6, the minutes of that part of your May 24th meeting when you discussed parking improvements.
- b. Page 7, a memo from the Building Department's Executive Assistant, Ms. Bonnie Miller, in which she states the recommendations for parking improvements that the Planning Board approved at its August 17th meeting.

FIVE-YEAR PLAN

The suggested plan is a mix of specific projects and long-term policies. The policies are:

- That the priority be to protect residential areas as much as possible from the disruptions caused by public parking.
- That no currently green-scaped plazas, such as the ones in front of the Best Western Motel between 8th and 9th Streets, and the ones on the four corners of D Street and the Boulevard, be used for parking.

- That no public parking improvements be put along 2nd Avenue except between A and 1st Streets, and no public parking improvements be put in the residential area that begins 150 feet west of the centerline of the Boulevard, and in other residential areas, such as along Mickler Boulevard.
- That parking improvements be put on un-green-scaped areas adjacent to condo and commercial developments, such as the north side of 4th Street by the Island South condos.
- That the City encourage and work with the County to build parking improvements along the north side of Pope Road from A1A Beach Boulevard westwards to a point to be determined.

The specific projects are:

- a. Fiscal Year 2022: The plazas on the west side of the Boulevard between A and 1st Streets.
- b. Fiscal Year 2023: North side of 4th Street from the Boulevard eastwards to the beach.
- c. Fiscal Year 2024: Unimproved plaza by the auto repair business, southwest corner of 8th Street and the Boulevard.
- d. Fiscal Year 2025: North side of 5th Street between the Boulevard and 2nd Avenue, adjacent to the Courtyard by Marriott.
- e. Fiscal Year 2026: Additional parking spaces for Ocean Hammock Park.

PLEASE NOTE: There is money in the proposed FY 22 budget for three parking projects: 1) the plaza at the southwest corner of 8th and the Boulevard, 2) the north side of 4th Street and 3) the plazas between A and 1st Streets.

We suggest that improving the plazas between A and 1st Streets be the sole parking improvement project for FY 22. The reasons are: This area has high public visibility and in its current condition is unsightly; it definitely needs to be improved because of flooding and lack of drainage; it could be a complicated project because of elevation issues and the need to make certain the improvements do not cause flooding to adjacent private property; and those complications could increase both engineering and construction costs.

ACTION REQUESTED

It is that you discuss the Planning Board recommendations, the administration's suggested policies and five-year plan, and whether the improvement of the plazas between A and 1st Streets should be the sole project for FY 22.

In the meantime, Mayor England and the City Manager will work on the letter to the County that you authorized at your August 11th meeting, requesting that the Pope Road parking improvements be put in a long-range plan.

MINUTES FROM MAY 24, 2021

1. Public Parking: Discussion of Where to Allow and Not Allow Parking and Creating Five-Year Plan for Improvements (Presenters: Max Royle, City Manager; Bill Tredik, Public Works Director)

Mayor England introduced Item 2 and asked for a staff report from City Manager Royle.

City Manager Royle stated this item is not about paid parking, only about more accessible parking. He showed in his memo all the parking spaces that could be considered. He advised that the parkette near Jack's BBQ could be considered for a parking improvement project because it floods. A realtor who represents the lots between 4th and 5th Streets advised that the owner is not going to construct a mixed-use development in that area and would be open to the City purchasing it for \$3 million dollars for the land with ten lots. That would be \$200,000 per lot and the City paid more for the lots on 10th Street in 2006 or 2007. He then requested Public Works Director Tredik to give a PowerPoint presentation.

Public Works Director Tredik showed his previous PowerPoint presentation on parking (Exhibit 2) and explained potential parking spaces, improvement of current parking spaces, and construction costs. He advised that there may be grant funding in the next year for these types of projects. He explained that there is a potential of 162 more parking spaces throughout A1A Beach Boulevard. He commented that with the River to the Sea Bike Trail parking will be even more important. Ocean Hammock Park and Hammock Dunes Park will be important places as well for bikers. Hammock Dunes Park has wetlands and has more challenges because of the environmental permitting that is necessary, so it is not on the provided list, but could be in the future.

Mayor England advised that the Vision Plan had potential changes.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that he is aware of the plan but does not know the parking selections from it tonight.

Vice Mayor Samora asked if his list aligns with the parking study that was done a few years back.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that he was not familiar with that study, but he would look at it.

Vice Mayor Samora advised that St. Johns County and the City paid for that and it may be beneficial to see how it coordinates with your information. He asked if Ocean Hammock Park parking would be done in Phase II and when does it have to be done according to the grant.

Public Works Director Tredik advised there are timelines, but the grantors have been generous with the City to extend the timelines. He explained that he extended it for another year or two. They will extend it if the City is showing progress. He advised that he is about to start the restrooms and doing the designs for Phase II currently. He said at some point they will not want to extend, but he is comfortable that the City is in good shape right now.

Commissioner Rumrell spoke with St. Johns County Commissioner Henry Dean regarding Pope Road. He advised that Mr. Howell, the previous Public Works Director, came up with a parking plan for angled parking spots along Pope Road. He asked staff to talk with Mr. Caldwell at St. Johns County to try to stop people from parking on the bend as they come around Embassy Suites. He advised that the parking plan had 20 to 25 parking spaces for Pope Road. He asked if staff and Mr. Caldwell could discuss it at a meeting.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that there was a study done for Pope Road presented a year ago by St. Johns County. He explained that that was back-in parking on the north side. He commented that he did not believe that was in any capital project list currently. He advised that he would like to work with St. Johns County on that. Some of the concerns he had about the study was it brought parking all the way to Mickler Boulevard, which is a residential single-family area.

Commissioner Rumrell advised that he thought it would be good to have St. Johns County and the City work together on that project.

Commissioner Torres advised that he has been advocating for parking improvements on A1A Beach Boulevard and A Street on the west side of the Boulevard. The aesthetics are inconsistent between the east and west side of the Boulevard regarding the bathrooms. The entrance of 1st Street gets very congested with parking. He explained that the area is not functional, and he would like disciplined parking even if parking spaces will be less. He would like this as a high priority. He also would like to improve parking on 1st Street and A1A Beach Boulevard as well.

Mayor England advised that Pier Park is a place for the events and parking is needed. On A Street there is supposed to be like a Town Center. The Vision Plan had a lot of suggestions how to improve the look of that area. It was supposed to be a focal point of the City. She suggested to write a plan and give it to the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board to help prioritize the projects. The beach goers can drive on the beach and City Manager Royle has counted 500 spaces. She suggested having more parking on the north end of the City for when the City has events and wanted to prioritize A Street, 16th Street, and areas closer to Pier Park. That way there are more spaces for events like Music by the Sea and for beach goers. She requested a point system in writing as a five-year plan and bring it to the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board.

Public Works Director Tredik advised as the budget season is approaching, he has parking improvements in the primarily budget, but not which project. He said that 4th Street was the easiest to implement; however, if the Commission would like him to move forward with A Street, he could do the design and permitting in next year's budget and research funding opportunities for construction the following year. He explained that if we do the total project, it might be more than the budget would allow in one year.

Vice Mayor Samora advised that the Commission has been talking about parking for a long time and not making much progress. He said that there are two categories, one is improvement of aesthetics and functionality like A Street and 4th Street, which do not add to the parking, and the other is adding parking spaces. He would be disappointed if there was only a design and not add parking spaces. He would like to look at both and would like a plan that shows additional parking spaces in this budget cycle.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that that would cost more in the budget this year.

Mayor England agreed with adding parking spaces where the City has their events. She explained that the list has 16th Street, 8th Street, and 4th Street, but a point system must be done to prioritize and then given to the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board and then bring it back to the Commission.

Mayor England opened the Public Comment section. The following addressed the Commission:

Brud Helhoski, 691 A1A Beach Blvd., St. Augustine Beach, FL, advised that his concern is people coming off A Street and driving up to Jacks BBQ. He explained that parking spaces will be lost, but he would like the handicap spaces to be in front of the older part of Jacks BBQ and facing towards Jacks BBQ. He asked that when the lot is improved, to please let him know and do it during off-season. He explained that 70% of the parking spaces are taken by employees of the local area and filled up before the beach traffic starts. At night it empties out and the majority of the people come to Jacks BBQ. He would not like traffic to go directly in front of Jacks BBQ.

Mayor England closed the Public Comments section and asked if most of the customers at Jacks BBQ are pedestrian walkups.

Mr. Helhoski advised yes, also bicyclist, pedestrian, motorcyclist, and scooters. He said when he charged for parking in his back lot there was still room for his customers. Holiday weekends were the only time it was full.

Mayor England asked if the parking behind the restaurant is going to be improved.

Mr. Helhoski advised yes, but in the future because he has his hands full right now.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that there will be at least four parking spaces lost at Jacks BBQ because traffic cannot come out at the intersection. When the design work is completed, we will work with the community around there for the best options.

Mayor England advised that safety is essential and do not forget a buffer needs to be on A1A Beach Boulevard, which could be a fence with a vine instead of bushes.

City Manager Royle recapped that the Commission wants a five-year parking plan, to put in the FY22 budget designing and permitting, improving existing parking spaces, and finding more parking spaces.

Mayor England also mentioned to create a point system through the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board which will come back to the Commission.

City Manager Royle advised that for FY22, staff can focus on the 8th Street plaza because that is significant as well as Ocean Hammock Park which will give 20 more parking spaces.

Mayor England said that parking spaces are important at Pier Park.

City Manager Royle advised that he and Mr. Tredik will have a meeting with St. Johns County regarding Pope Road in order to get more spaces by Pier Park.

Mayor England asked about 16th Street having more parking spaces.

City Manager Royle advised that there is one row of parking on 16th Street already.

Mayor England asked about 8th Street.

Public Works Director Tredik said that there is potential for ten parking spaces in front of Seaside Anastasia at 16th Street. That project would cost approximately \$40,000 - \$50,000 for ten parking spaces. He explained that one of those streets could be put in the budget for design phase next year. The Commission could approve the ranking and then the projects could start.

Vice Mayor Samora explained that he wants new parking spaces not design and permitting. If there is not enough in the budget, then the City will have to sort that out. Public Works Director Tredik advised that he will budget for actual construction.

Vice Mayor Samora advised that he wants to have a point system, take it to the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board and come back to the Commission at the next meeting. Keep this on track so that we can add parking for next fiscal year to the budget.

City Manager Royle advised that 8th Street on the west side the Commission should keep in mind how much parking the Commission wants versus beautification. There are nicely

landscaped plazas along the Boulevard that contribute to the City's look. The D Street plaza is in front of a house and the owner may not want a parking lot in front of her front door. There are several things to consider.

Mayor England advised that that should be a part of the Vision Plan and Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board should agree with what plazas should remain landscaping or rest areas for pedestrians and what should be additional parking spaces.

Commissioner Torres thought that parking improvements have been in the budget for years. He agreed with City Manager Royle that he does not want the Boulevard to be only parking spaces for events. He understands high traffic events, but vision was the Pier Park area is not appealing. There is sand on the Boulevard every morning and he was hoping to get that done in this budget year.

City Manager Royle advised that there will be a two-direction project, improvement of existing parking spaces and acquisition of new parking spaces. He commented to the Commission the problem with the community garden on the plaza on 1st Street and A Street. If parking is proposed there, there will be the same problems and recommended not to look at those plazas for the time being.

Mayor England advised that the walk space on 2nd Avenue should be preserved as much as possible. She would like to keep in mind the Vision Plan regarding A Street as the Town Center and work with the community to improve that.

City Manager Royle advised that residents are complaining about people parking along 2nd Avenue, so "No Parking" signs have been put up.

Vice Mayor Samora asked how many parking spaces on 2nd Avenue.

City Manager Royle advised that it is hard to tell because people park in a lot of different directions. The City put new signs up between A Street and C Street because of residents' complaints, which took away parking spaces.

Commissioner Rumrell advised that there must be a balance. Have the Boulevard look nice, but if we do not add spaces then people park in the residents' neighborhoods. The goal is to get people out of the neighborhoods and into the streets. Maybe there could be a hybrid plan with the plazas and the parking lots to get people from parking in neighborhoods. He suggested working with St. Johns County regarding the bend on Pope Road where people walk out, and cars are going 45 mph on a curve.

City Manager Royle advised that working with St. Johns County would be a key priority to have them put parking on Pope Road in their capital plan.

Vice Mayor Samora agreed with a balance and the City needs a five-year plan that allocates money for improvements, whether is it aesthetic improvements such as A Street and 4th Street and to have additional parking as well. He commented that the City has enough park lands and parkettes to create a balance. He would like some movement and a long-range plan for it.

Mayor England asked to include in the plan the number of parkettes, the number dedicated to landscaping and rest spots, and the number of parkettes that would be developed for parking.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that he has the direction that is needed.

MEMO

To: Max Royle, City Manager
From: Bonnie Miller, Executive Assistant
Subject: Priority List of Projects for Public Parking Improvements
Date: Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Please be advised at its regular monthly meeting held Tuesday, August 17, 2021, the City of St. Augustine Beach Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board voted unanimously to recommend to the City Commission the Board's suggestions for creating a priority list of projects for a five-year plan for public parking improvements.

Continued and tabled from the Board's June 15, 2021 and July 20, 2021 regular monthly meetings, the Board was directed by the City Commission to discuss, review, and provide a priority list of projects for a five-year plan of parking improvements, based on an overview of current and proposed parking areas prepared by Public Works Director Bill Tredik.

The motion to recommend the City Commission continue to explore opportunities for increased and improved parking, not alter any improved or currently green-scaped plazas or residential areas, encourage continued involvement with St. Johns County's efforts to develop parking opportunities on the north side of Pope Road, and prioritize improved public parking on the City plaza on the northwest corner of A Street and A1A Beach Boulevard (in front of Jack's Bar-B-Que), was made by Mr. Kincaid, seconded by Ms. Odom, and passed 6-0 by unanimous voice-vote.