



MANAGER'S MEMORANDUM

Prepared for: **Naperville City Council**

By: City Manager's office

10/01/2020

A. MANAGER'S MEMORANDUM

Source:
1. TED Business Group

Subject:
Commuter Parking and Access Work
Plan Update

Action:
FYI

**CITY OF NAPERVILLE
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: October 1, 2020

TO: Doug Krieger, City Manager
William J. Novack, Director of TED Business Group

FROM: Jennifer Louden, Deputy Director of TED Business Group

SUBJECT: Commuter Parking and Access Work Plan Update

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Mayor and City Council with an update on the Commuter Parking and Access Work Plan and discuss the need to re-evaluate the plan goals and tasks based on current commuting trends.

BACKGROUND:

On June 4, 2019, City Council approved a multiyear Commuter Parking and Access Work Plan that outlined goals and corresponding tasks to address issues with current commuter programs and implement system improvements. The plan was developed under the assumption that demand for commuter parking would remain high; however, commuter parking activity is currently at a historic low level due to a steep decline in Metra ridership caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

DISCUSSION:

Actions to Date

Prior to March 2020, the following tasks were completed in support of the work plan goals.

1) Commuter Parking Rules and Regulations update

The first action needed to initiate several tasks was to update the Commuter Parking Rules and Regulations. Effective July 12, 2019, the Commuter Parking Rules and Regulations were updated to include language that:

- Requires permit holders to submit vehicle registration information to demonstrate that vehicles included in the account are registered to their address;
- Eliminates the option to designate carpools through a permit account;
- Establishes a process to allow carpool exemptions once per quarter for up to two weeks; and
- Requires all waitlisted commuters to re-apply each year.

2) Commuter parking permit account audits

On July 19, 2019, City staff mailed a letter to all quarterly permit holders that provided notification of the Rules and Regulations update and outlined actions to be completed by each permit holder to verify and update their account. The deadline for submitting the required Account Verification Form and vehicle registration information varied by parking

lot to allow time for staff to process the account updates. At the time of notification, there were a total of 2,608 quarterly commuter permits issued for the four lots:

- Kroehler Lot: 435 permits
- Burlington Lot: 878 permits
- Parkview Lot: 201 permits
- Route 59: 1,094 permits

The verification process resulted in a decrease in the number of permits issued for each lot due to both voluntary cancelations and cancelations due to a lack of response to the audit. Occupancy rates at all three Naperville Station lots (Kroehler, Burlington and Parkview) decreased to at or below 80% after the new regulations were put in place and the verification process began. Because occupancy rates are used to determine the number of new permits offered to waitlisted commuters each quarter, staff was able to be aggressive when making permit offers for the first and second quarters of 2020. As a result, the waitlists were significantly reduced. In March 2020, the Kroehler wait was at four years, down from the seven-year wait time reported during the fourth quarter of 2018. The combined Burlington/Parkview wait was at 10 years, down from the 14-year wait time reported during the fourth quarter of 2018.

3) Commuter parking permit field audits

Staff developed a process for conducting spot audits of parked vehicles once the permit account verification process was completed for the Naperville Station lots. The goal of the spot audits was to discourage secondhand permit transfers by reinforcing that only the permit holder may use their assigned hang tag in the vehicles listed on their account. The audits were conducted by comparing the license plate of the vehicle displaying a hang tag to the plates listed on the account. Where a mis-match was identified, the permit holder could provide proper documentation of their registered vehicles. If they could not provide the information, their account was terminated for misuse. Audits were conducted periodically during the first quarter of 2020. Over 260 vehicles were spot audited, resulting in 10 account terminations.

Work Plan Re-evaluation

As previously noted, Metra ridership and commuter parking activity are currently at a historic low. On the BNSF line, which serves the Naperville and Route 59 stations, Metra is currently running less than half of the number of train trips as compared to early March of this year. Ridership during the month of June 2020 declined 96.4% as compared to June 2019. A return to high commuter demand will likely lag behind an overall recovery as public health concerns may remain, and employers may continue to encourage remote work. Many work plan goals and tasks now need to be re-evaluated in consideration of these current trends and the pandemic's overall impact.

To help inform this process, staff issued a survey to obtain data on pre-pandemic commuting patterns, when commuters anticipate returning to transit, and how often they expect to use transit in the future. The survey was released on Thursday, September 24 and will remain open until Thursday, October 15. To publicize the survey, staff issued a

Commuter Connection eNewsletter, directly emailed all permit holders and commuters on the waitlist with an invitation to participate and shared the survey link on social media. The survey results will be shared via the Manager's Memorandum once staff has an opportunity to analyze the data. Staff will develop a revised work plan for City Council consideration by the end of the first quarter of 2021.

RECOMMENDATION:

Please share this information with the Mayor and City Council through the Manager's Memorandum.