

**City Council Workshop Agenda**

**Brainerd, Minnesota  
October 25th, 2021  
6:00 P.M.**

**City Hall Council Chambers**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Approval/Amendment of Agenda**
- 4. Parking Commission Recommendation**
- 5. Adjourn**

K. Stunek  
 G. Johnson  
 D. Pritschet  
 T. Stenglein  
 T. Erickson  
 M. O'Day  
 K. Bevans  
 D. Badeaux

**Any individual needing special accommodations, please call 828-2307**



# Brainerd City Council Agenda Request

**Requested Meeting Date:**

**Title of Item:**

<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> P&F COMMITTEE <input type="checkbox"/> SPW COMMITTEE <input type="checkbox"/> MAIN AGENDA	<b>Action Requested:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <i>*provide copy of published hearing notice</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing* <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading
<b>Submitted by:</b>	<b>Department:</b>
<b>Presenter (Name &amp; Title):</b>	<b>Estimated Time Needed:</b>
<b>Summary of Issue:</b>	
<b>Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:</b>	
<b>Recommended Action/Motion:</b>	
<b>Financial Impact:</b> Is there a cost associated with this request: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No What is the total cost, with tax and shipping \$ _____ Is this budgeted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <u>Please Explain:</u>	

# THE PARKING PLAN

## OVERVIEW

The Parking Commission was tasked by the City Council to study and make recommendations regarding parking in the City of Brainerd with specific emphasis on reviewing the City's leased parking. With a focus on the downtown area, the Parking Commission discussed the various issues they see as business owners, patrons, advocates, and residents of the downtown. These discussions included members of city staff (City Administrator, City Engineer, Community Development Director, Police Chief, and Finance Director), members of the City Council, and members of the public through a town hall meeting held in June. The Commission also conducted a parking study of the downtown area. The following recommendations are a result of these in-depth discussions and analysis of parking in downtown Brainerd.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation #1:** Increase the rates for leased lots to a level commensurate with what the private sector may offer and increase rates by 5% each year to adjust with inflation. The Commission recommends the following changes to the fee schedule:

Parking Lot	Current Rate	Proposed Rate	Current Net Revenue	Net Revenue with Proposed Change
Burlington Northern	\$20.00 & \$25.00	\$45.00 & \$55.00	(\$15,732)	\$2,734
Maple	\$15.00	\$25.00	\$8,095	\$14,983
Alley	\$35.00	\$50.00	\$5,239	\$11,652
City Hall	\$35.00	\$50.00	\$3,394	\$4,997

**Justification:** The need for an increase in rates is multifaceted. First, the Burlington Northern lot annually operates in a deficit and is ultimately subsidized by the Maple lot, Alley, and City Hall lot. While simply raising the rates for the Burlington lot would address the deficit issue, the Commission believes that the City should also likewise increase the rates for the Maple lot, Alley, and City Hall lot to bring them closer in line with what may be charge by the private sector. Finally, increased rates will ensure that the Parking Lot Fund is fully self-sufficient moving forward.

Parking lot rates were last adjusted in 2019. At that time, the Burlington Northern lot was increased from \$10.00 and \$15.00, and both the Alley and the City Hall lot were increased from \$25.00. The Maple lot was the one lot whose rate was decreased from \$20.00. The reasoning for the decrease at that time was because the average occupancy of the lot was less than 45% and the decreased was aimed at getting more people to park there. However, since September of 2019, the lot has maintained full occupancy most of the year as students have been parking in the lot due to the Brainerd High School construction project. Even though most of these students give up their spots in the summer months (June through August), the lot has continued to maintain an occupancy greater than 60% during those months. Additionally, roughly half of the commercial

spaces downtown were vacant and approximately 25 rental units have been added downtown since 2019. With the increased activity downtown as well as the greater awareness of the Maple lot due to the high school project, staff believes that the Maple lot will continue to have a high occupancy rate into the future even after the high school project is completed.

**Implementation Cost:** Staff time

**Implementation Timeline:** January 1, 2022

**Recommendation #2:** Implement parking meters between the hours of 8:00am and 5:00pm, initially allowing the first 15 minutes of parking for free, along the following sections of street:

- Laurel St. between S. 6<sup>th</sup> St. and S. 8<sup>th</sup> St.
- S. 7<sup>th</sup> St. between Front St. and Maple St.

**Justification:** One of the primary issues with downtown parking that the Commission reviewed is the balance of allowing enough time for on-street parking on the core downtown streets for business patrons to shop, eat, and enjoy all that downtown has to offer while keeping commercial and residential tenants from monopolizing the prime parking areas. Increasing on-street parking from 2 hours would allow sufficient time for most patrons to enjoy the downtown but would likely result in abuse by tenants. In addition, the Brainerd Police Department does not currently have the capacity to provide the regular, consistent enforcement necessary to ensure all users of downtown parking are respecting the posting limits.

Implementing parking meters along the two crossroads downtown (approximately 100 spaces) would provide an easy solution to both of these issues. Anyone may park on Laurel St. and S. 7<sup>th</sup> St for as long as they desire as long as they are willing to pay for it. Additionally, meters would aid the Police Department in enforcement as no chalking of tires with follow-up checks would be required. Officers and CSOs would simply need to check to ensure that meters are paid. Finally, providing the first 15 minutes free would allow for patrons making quick stops to parking without having to pay, and allowing free on-street parking between 5:00pm and 8:00am would continue to provide the necessary night parking for tenants as well as those who choose to leave their vehicles downtown after visiting the downtown's various bars. The Commission also recommends initially allowing the first hour to be free and then gradually reducing it to 15 minutes to help get people used to using the meters.

**Implementation Cost:** Approximately \$80,000 to \$120,000 plus monthly operating fees (approximately \$500-\$750, which would be paid for by meter revenue).

- Estimate based on individual meters per spot. Cost could be reduced if central kiosks are used instead.
- Meters would accommodate coin, credit card, and mobile app.

**Implementation Timeline:** Critical to the management of parking and overall implementation of this plan.

**Recommendation #3:** Designate 90% of the net revenue generated by downtown parking meters and leased spaces for downtown programs and improvements, and transfer these funds to the EDA for implementation.

**Justification:** Allocating 90% of the net revenue generated by downtown parking meters and leased spaces for downtown programs and improvements would have many benefits. Primarily, it would allow for continued economic vitality in the downtown through grants, beautification, marketing, etc. without costing Brainerd taxpayers a dime. In fact, use of these funds in the downtown may actually result in increased downtown property values, which only takes some of the burden off the residential tax base.

The intent of keeping 10% of net revenue in the Parking Fund would be to ensure that the fund maintains a sufficient balance to cover any unanticipated costs that the fund may incur (e.g. snow falls greater than anticipated, damage to lots and meters, reconstruction bid prices than come in higher than anticipated, etc.).

**Implementation Cost:** Staff time

**Implementation Timeline:** January 1, 2022

**Recommendation #4:** Update downtown kiosks in a manner that matches the aesthetics of the downtown, and implement wayfinding in and around the downtown area to guide visitors and residents alike to the various amenities in and around the downtown, with elements including but not limited to:

- Location of parking
- Distances to public areas (e.g. City Hall, Library, Gregory Park, County Courthouse, 7<sup>th</sup> & Laurel, High School, etc.)
- Maps of downtown businesses and services
- Community information (i.e. event notices, street closures, etc.)

**Justification:** A reoccurring topic that was continually brought up during the Commission's discussions was the need for wayfinding and a general improvement in communication downtown. Wayfinding will provide pedestrians and motorists alike on-street directions to various destinations while updated kiosks in and around the downtown can be used to provide more specific information such as locations of individual businesses and services and announcements such as events and street closures. Updated kiosks will also ensure the information is regularly kept up to date and are, in general, much more appealing than the current pinboard kiosks.

**Implementation Cost:** The Commission recommends using Parking Fund revenue designated to the EDA to fund these improvements. Depending on the size, quality, and design of kiosks, prices vary between \$500 and \$5,000 per kiosk. The cost of wayfinding would be the cost of the signs, road paint, etc. used and whether the project planning is contracted out or done in house.

**Implementation Timeline:** As determined by the EDA as revenue becomes available.

**Recommendation #5:** Update the City's ordinances to require property owners in and around the downtown to identify off-street areas where their tenants (commercial and residential) will park.

**Justification:** Currently, property owners in the downtown area are exempt from providing any off-street parking for their commercial and residential tenants. This was not an issue 5 years ago when the downtown was 50% empty but is becoming and will continue to become an issue as the downtown continues to fill back in. In just the last 3 years alone, over a dozen commercial spaces and over 3 dozen apartment units have been filled that were previously empty or non-existent. In any residential zone, property owners would be required to provide 1 ¼ off-street parking spaces per unit. This recommendation acknowledges that downtown property owners, generally, do not have the ability to add off-street parking but do have a responsibility to account for any additional burden to parking that may result from additional development/redevelopment.

**Implementation Cost:** Staff time

**Implementation Timeline:** Immediately as part of zoning code update

**Recommendation #6:** Charge the EDA with the task of developing a marketing strategy and list the Front St. lot, Laurel St. lot, and City Hall lot for redevelopment.

**Justification:** If the above recommendations are implemented, the Commission believes that the opportunity cost of maintaining the parcels that contain the Laurel St. lot, Front St. lot, and City Hall lot in their current capacity will become higher than their use as parking lots. For example, a building with an estimated market value of \$1,000,000 would have a tax capacity (based on the city's total 2021 tax capacity) of \$19,250. Such a project alone could result in either a 0.173% reduction in the City's levy (based on the 2021 tax levy) or or \$14,116 in additional tax revenue should the 2021 tax rate of 73.430% stay the same. This also does not take into account the economic benefits such a project would reap the construction and maintenance of such a building and the businesses and residential units the building could house. Finally, as the Eight05 Laurel project showed, a new building on the site of a current parking lot would not necessarily create a burden on parking as the building could be designed to include its own off-street parking.

**Implementation Cost:** Staff time plus costs of marketing/development firm if such services are acquired

**Implementation Timeline:** Immediately, but with patience

**Recommendation #7:** Continue to take steps to make areas in and around downtown a much more pedestrian friendly place. Such improvements could include but are not limited to:

- Alley lighting and aesthetic improvements
- Additional benches
- Picnic tables

- Bike racks
- Designated bike lanes
- Green spaces

**Justification:** As the downtown area continues to thrive through positive redevelopment, an emphasis must continue to be made on making downtown not just a commercial space that is auto oriented and where people do business and leave but a community space where people live. Simple improvements like those listed above will help to continue to turn the page from an auto oriented concrete jungle to a pedestrian friendly community space.

**Implementation Cost:** The Commission recommends using Parking Fund revenue designated to the EDA to fund experience improvements (e.g. bike racks, picnic benches, etc.) and capital funds for infrastructure improvements (e.g. lighting, bike lanes, green spaces, etc.).

**Implementation Timeline:** As determined by the EDA for experience improvements and by the City Council for infrastructure improvements.) as revenue becomes available

**Recommendation #8:** Implement a targeted informational and educational campaign to inform and educate the property owners, business owners, residential tenants, and patrons in and around the downtown area of any recommendations the City Council chooses to implement to ensure communication between the City and property owners.

**Justification:** Implementation of any of the recommendations made in this plan will have a certain level of impact on the downtown, some more significant than others. To ensure smooth implementation, all users of the downtown should be regularly kept up to date on any immediate or future changes to the current landscape of the downtown.

**Implementation Cost:** Staff time

**Implementation Timeline:** Continually

## CLOSING

The Parking Commission acknowledges that these 8 recommendations are not be-all-end-all solutions, but they are a good start to a new direction. If adopted, in whole or in part, by the City Council, the Commission believes that it has achieved the goal that it was given by the Council. The next step would be for the Commission to either be disbanded until a time arises for a new parking commission to be formed to address issues not yet identified or to be given a new task. Either way, the Commission is proud of the work that has been done and looks forward to seeing these recommendations put into action.

<b>Company</b>	<b>IPS</b>	<b>CivicSmart</b>
Total Quoted Installation Cost	\$ 112,570.00	\$ 77,680.00
Quoted Monthly Cost	\$ 755.00	\$ 550.00
1 Year Pay-off Monthly Cost	\$ 10,135.83	\$ 7,023.33
Hours Parked Meter/Month to Pay-off	101.36	70.23
2 Year Pay-off Monthly Cost	\$ 5,445.42	\$ 3,786.67
Hours Parked Meter/Month to Pay-off	54.45	37.87
Hours Parked Meter/Month after Pay-off	7.55	5.50

\*Assumes rate of \$1/hr

\*\*Quotes based on 100 meters installed