

Introduced and Read April, 2008  
Adopted April, 2008  
Posted \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, 2008

**CITY OF MOUNT RAINIER  
RESOLUTION 6-2008**

(Drafted by City Manager)

Introduced by: Council member Tarlau *Mayor and Council member  
Briones, Norton and Knedler*

**A Resolution recreating the Parking Task Force in the City of Mount Rainier**

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council have the authority to create committees and appoint members to those committees; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council recognize that there is a critical shortage of spaces to legally park in the city's downtown as well as in residential neighborhoods; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council are diligently working to improve and revitalize the City's downtown business district.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Council that the Parking Task Force is hereby recreated to address the parking needs of the City. This task force will research criteria that will include but is not limited to the following:

1. Evaluation of surface parking needs
2. Investigation of possible sites for structured parking
3. Identification of possible funding sources
4. Evaluation of residential parking permits
5. Review and amend the 1994 draft report issued by the Mount Rainier Town Center Parking Task Force which is attached to this Resolution

Attest:

*Jeannelle B. Wallace*  
Jeannelle B. Wallace, City Manager

*Malinda Miles*  
Malinda Miles, Mayor

*Alta Morton*  
Alta Morton, Councilmember

*Jimmy Tarlau*  
Jimmy Tarlau, Councilmember

*Pedro Briones*  
Pedro Briones, Councilmember

*Bryan Knedler*  
Bryan Knedler, Councilmember

*to recommend specific next steps and timeline for next steps and process*

**Mount Rainier Town Center  
Parking Task Force  
Report to Mayor and City Council**

**December 2004**

**-- DRAFT --**

Task force members:

Dana Grabiner, Chair  
Bonnie Abigail  
Linda Alexander  
James Booth  
Joan Ring Cook  
Bob Dicken  
Peggy Dillon  
David Graham  
Kojo Johnson  
Therese Nemil  
Jim Polley  
Steve Shaff  
Fred Sissine  
Kirsten Slater  
Robert Taylor

## Introduction

The Mount Rainier Town Center Parking Task Force was established in the spring of 2004 by the City Council to study the city's existing parking status and to make recommendations about the city's future parking needs. The council's authorization of the Task Force arose from a confluence of several factors, notably the accelerating revitalization of the Town Center that accompanied the blossoming of the Gateway Arts District, and a recognition that the city's current parking infrastructure would be insufficient to meet future parking needs resulting from that revitalization.

Over a six-month period, the Task Force met monthly and also held a public forum to solicit input from residents, church leaders, and business owners and operators. In addition, during those six months Task Force members studied and discussed previous Town Center parking studies, analyzed on-street and off-street parking availability, received briefings from government and private-sector parking experts, and consulted the findings of the Mount Rainier Town Center Urban Renewal Plan and the Prince George's County Gateway Arts District Preliminary Sector Plan. Members were especially mindful of the need to enhance parking availability in the Town Center that would allow businesses to thrive while preserving the downtown's historic integrity and encouraging the growth and development of the arts district.

## Findings

Task Force members concluded that at present, there are sufficient parking spaces in the Town Center to accommodate patrons of downtown businesses and attendees of downtown churches. They further concluded that a parking "crisis" is not likely to arise in Mount Rainier's Town Center with the opening, in early 2005, of the 40-unit Artspace live/work building at the corner of 34th Street and Rhode Island Avenue.

However, Task Force members agreed that the city should, as soon as possible, maximize on-street parking opportunities currently available to the city. To that end, the force suggests implementation of a number of short-term measures to improve and expand public parking to accommodate anticipated future needs. These are measures that the Task Force believes can be started immediately and completed in the next one- to two years. The majority of members believed that the city possessed the capability to undertake these short-term measures using the expertise of municipal personnel and without having to hire outside consultants. What follow are the Task Force's short-term recommendations, followed by a brief discussion of medium- and long-term parking recommendations.

## Short-Term Recommendations (1-2 years)

The following short-term suggestions for improving and expanding parking in Mount Rainier are largely a result of Task Force members' observations, discussions with business and property owners in the Town Center, minutes of and documents related to previous Parking Task Force committee meetings, e-mails from committee Chair Dana Grabiner, and the 1992 study filed at the Mount Rainier library that was completed by the county Parking Authority.

Many of these improvements can come in form of parking meter management. Specifically:

- Upgrade existing parking meters with electronic versions to help in programming, tracking, and adjusting rates.
- Relocate and/or add meters as needed in commercial areas throughout the Town Center to increase turnover. For instance, add meters to the north side of the 3300 block of Bunker Hill. (According to a 5/20/04 document submitted by Douglas Holland to the Hyattsville City Council, new single-headed meters cost about \$450, while double-headed meters cost about \$950.)
- Have meters be double-headed where possible for aesthetic purposes.
- Consult Hyattsville officials on how they implemented new meter program.
- If necessary, consult Wesley Pollard, Marketing Director of Worldwide Parking Inc., who spoke at November 17 public forum regarding parking needs; his company provides on-street and off-street parking management systems. At the very least, use information from the survey questions he provided James Booth and that form the basis of parking plan.
- Make times of adjacent meters consistent. For instance, have all parking along Rhode Island Avenue metered and for two hours. That two-hour period of time should be clearly marked on meters and with overhead/standing signs so there's no confusion among users. Two hours encourages people to park and do multiple errands in the city instead of feeling rushed.
- Make sure all parking meters work. Also make sure they clearly state how long people can park there. Have meters allow time for people to conduct business in a reasonable fashion that will make them want to come back to those businesses, and make sure all meters in a particular stretch are for the same amount of time, so that people can get to know where there is 1-hour parking, 2-hour parking, etc.
- Add meters to private lots (such as Dr. Gupta's lot on 3503 Perry Street) and have city enforce metering and receive a portion of revenue.

- increase meter rates around Town Center from 25 cents per hour to between 50 cents and 1 dollar per hour, with rates to vary by area.

Other short-term actions to be considered include:

- Encourage churches to share parking with the public during non-peak hours. The Metropolitan Church of God is currently proposing to develop a lot at 3841 34th Street, and church officials have said they are working on ways to share parking with the public. Other churches where this option could be pursued include those at 33rd Street and Bunker Hill Road, 35th Street and Bunker Hill Road, and 34th and Shepherd streets.

- Determine the feasibility of acquiring land for public parking in the lots adjacent to Chuck's Liquors, behind Dar es Salaam, and in the lot area adjacent to and behind Mount Rainier Flower Shop and DC Digital Communications on Perry Street. Consider "pay stations" for these lots similar to the station used at the Franklin's parking lot.

- Also check the possibility of using land for parking that is in Brentwood or in the District of Columbia (i.e., at the northwest and southwest corners of Eastern and Rhode Island Avenue).

- Add lighting to areas surrounding present and future businesses that may have a nighttime clientele.

- Tear down and put metered parking at the funeral home site at northeast corner of Eastern Avenue/Rhode Island Avenue. Would need lighting in parking lot and crosswalk across Rhode Island Avenue. (Note: I have heard reports that there are discussions under way regarding possible long-term plans for condominiums on that corner and at Bass and Thrifty, which, if they come to pass, would eliminate this suggestion.)

- Rely on existing county parking requirements for new development and change of use, or consider making more stringent requirements.

- Issue zoned parking permits for residents whose properties are close to Town Center commercial district.

- Improve striping of parking areas so it is clear to customers where parking is and is not allowed.

- Make sure there is sufficient police department enforcement of metered parking and adherence to zoned areas, in order to ensure parking turnover.

- Give parking permits to employees of Town Center businesses so they will free up metered parking for customers.
- Consider taking property by eminent domain as needed, in keeping with City's Urban Renewal Plan.
- Use existing and new infrastructure—such as signage and parking meter poles—to provide information that makes parking easy for motorists to find. At the same time, do this in a way that both reduces visual clutter and uses artistic elements in conveying this information in order to enhance the appearance of the Gateway Arts District. Also make sure that such information does not create pedestrian obstructions.
- Use CDBG funding for parking upgrades, and possibly for acquiring land for construction of a parking lot.
- Improve communication with police department regarding unfair ticketing of business patrons, which is driving those patrons away. City officials—and police in particular—are perceived by numerous business owners as NOT being business-friendly. (For example, one business owner said that some patrons are getting tickets because they are getting less time on the meter than it registers.)
- The majority of Task Force members do not feel that a parking survey by an outside consultant is necessary. However, if at some point the city chooses to undertake such a survey, seek funding from the Mount Rainier Business Association to help defray costs of the survey and implementation of its findings.
- Create spaces and racks for bicycle parking.
- Review general surveys about parking use to see how findings could be of use to Mount Rainier.
- Work with Redevelopment Authority to “trade” abandoned bungalow behind Artspace for bungalow now being used for community tool shed.
- Eliminate the “Reserved for Doctor” space in the 3300 block of Perry Street; it has no meter and people are afraid to park there.
- Clarify space needs in front of the police station. Parking space markings are confusing regarding when the public can park there.
- Have all measures incorporate an artistic flair to reflect the Gateway Arts District's development.

Medium- to Long-Term Recommendations (3-5 years and beyond)

### Conclusions

While Task Force members believe that the aforementioned suggestions will greatly improve and expand parking in Mount Rainier's Town Center, we recognize that as downtown revitalization continues, the subject of parking will have to be revisited on a periodic basis. We therefore agree to reconvene as necessary in the future to revise our suggestions as needed.