

MEMORANDUM

TO: Park Advisory Commission

FROM: Colin Smith, Parks & Recreation Services Manager

CC: Sumedh Bahl, Community Services Area Administrator

DATE: October 21, 2014

SUBJECT: Information regarding Fuller Park parking lot

On September 15, 2014, Council passed resolution R-14-323 asking PAC to provide recommendations to Council by November 6, 2014 regarding the Fuller Park Parking Lot lease with the University of Michigan. Areas to reconsider included lease rates, length of lease duration, the history of parking in Fuller Park, and the relationship of the parking lot to identified initiatives in the PROS plan.

This memorandum provides a summary of information that staff has collected, along with an appendix of attachments in order to provide as much information as possible for PAC to make a fully considered recommendation.

History of parking at Fuller Park

Fuller Park has a long history and established precedent of leasing parking to non-park users, even prior to the establishment of the parking lot on the south side of Fuller Road. Records show that in 1972 St. Joseph Mercy Hospital leased parking for their employees at Fuller Park. In 1980, Council, recognizing that the parking lot was consistently used by individuals for reasons other than recreational purposes established permit parking, managed by the Parking System Division of the City, for up to 115 spaces at Fuller Park, between September and April. Proceeds from the sale of the permits were deposited as revenue into the Fuller recreation account. In 1986 Council passed another resolution to provide parking at Fuller Park, including the newly developed 'gravel' lot, increasing the amount of spaces for rent to over 210. Revenues for permit sales were again designated for deposit in the Fuller Park revenue budget. In 1990 the Mayor and City Administrator discussed developing a parking lot on the south side of Fuller Road in Fuller Park, recognizing the potential for an additional source of revenue. The Parks department noted the desire for the establishment of an additional soccer field in that area, along with a need for additional parking to service the soccer field and park. In May, 1993 the University proposed using the space for temporary parking during the construction of the Cancer and Geriatric Units on the hospital campus. The University proposed paying \$70,000 for the construction of a temporary lot. PAC considered this proposal in May, 1993 and requested that the Fuller parking lot proposal and the Fuller/Oak Way right-of-way be tied together during negotiations between the City and the UM. In July, 1993 PAC unanimously approved a plan and

agreement that placed a parking lot in Fuller Park on the south side of Fuller Road. In exchange for the parking lot agreement the University would use the lot at times not in conflict with park use and the University would grant an easement to the City to accommodate moving the Fuller/Oak Way ROW to avoid identified Burr Oak trees. In September, 1993 City Council approved an agreement with the UM for a joint use parking lot agreement at Fuller Park. Terms of the agreement included the University funding the design and construction of a 250 space parking lot at a cost not to exceed \$375,000. The lease of the parking spaces was for a period of 15 years, with the University having an option to renew the lease for successive 5 year periods upon the same terms and conditions. The agreement also noted the Oakway Road easement. In 2009 Council approved a new lease with the UM for Fuller Parking lot, for two years, with two successive two year renewal options. The agreement continued the arrangement of the parking lots availability for rental being based on recreational needs first. During the summer parking for swimming, soccer field usage, and general park usage requires use of all lots at certain times.

Appendix 'A' provides documentation related to numerous key dates referenced above, the Council resolution asking PAC to reconsider the proposed Fuller Parking lease, a map of the area, and PAC's original resolution recommending approval of the lease.

Fuller Parking Lot lease charges

Council has previously approved the amount charged for Fuller Parking lot, so an established base exists from which future lease amounts are derived.

	South Lot	North Lot	North Gravel	Total
1994 – 1998	\$25,000	NA	NA	NA
1997 – 2003	\$26,875	NA	NA	NA
2004 – 2008	\$28,890	NA	NA	NA
2009 – 2010	\$31,057	\$31,057	\$5,579	\$69,552
2010 - 2012	\$33,198	\$33,198	\$6,359	\$72,765
2012 - 2014	\$35,890	\$35,890	\$6,875	\$78,665

NA = During this time the City sold permits for parking in the North lots. Comprehensive revenue figures are not available.

Over the years a steady increase to the base amounts has occurred. The proposed lease does not include an increase for 2014 – 2016. However, the UM has provided parking resources off Canal Street for overflow Argo Canoe Livery parking at no charge to the City. The UM allows the City to temporarily advertise and sign the use of the lots for overflow Livery parking on the weekends, providing as many as 100 additional spaces.

The Fuller parking lot is signed as a 'yellow' lot for University parking permit holders. The cost for a 'yellow' permit is \$153.00 annually. One method for relating the amount

the University pays to the City is to take the amount of spots available and multiply by the annual permit fee the University charges its users. This amounts to \$74,205 (approximately 485 spaces multiplies by \$153.00). However, the University does not have access to the parking lots on the weekends or after 5pm, so effectively the parking lots are leased less than 50% of the year.

This amount is significantly less than DDA parking options; however the Fuller parking lots are not in the DDA district, are not covered, and in some instances are not paved. For the sake of comparison, the 415 W. Washington Lot, uncovered and unpaved and managed by the DDA is available for a monthly rate of \$90.00, translating to an annual rate of \$1,080.00.

Suggestions from the public have included charging the UM a rate more in line with a 'blue' permit cost. This would result in roughly quintupling the existing lease amounts. Included in your attachments is a UM parking map that shows what lots are 'yellow', 'blue', or 'gold'. Generally, the proximity to work places appears to drive the designation.

Appendix 'B' provides UM parking rates and locations and DDA parking rates for surface lots and an email regarding lease rates

Parking lot relationship to the PROS plan

Staff has reviewed the relationship between the parking lot location on the south side of Fuller and locations for proposed shared use paths illustrated in the PROS Plan and Non-motorized Transportation Plan. The proposed shared-use path is listed as 8 – 10' wide.

There is approximately 36 - 48' of land between the southernmost boundary of the parking lot and the railroad ROW property boundary line. A wider path (10') such as the one running alongside the Cascades, would fit within the existing layout, and allow for the recommended 2' feet graded buffer area on either side of the path, per construction standards.

Appendix 'C' provides documents from PROS plan and Non-motorized plan and an email regarding the relationship of these plans to the parking lot lease.

Burr Oaks relationship to Fuller Parking

As mentioned above, the 1993 agreement with the UM included a ROW easement to the City for up to 4.31 acres for construction of the realigned Fuller Road near the VA hospital. The intent behind relocating the road was to save a grove of Burr oak trees.

On September 22, the city's Urban Forestry and Natural Resources Planning Coordinator met with Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital staff for a site visit to assess and discuss trees on the VA property. Several areas of the property were

assessed during the site visit and they are identified in the attached map. The field visit started at the dirt contractor parking lot off Fuller Court. At this site, City staff observed two dead Hickory trees within the parking lot, an oak tree that is showing signs of decline at the southeast corner of the parking lot and a dead oak tree approximately 15-20 feet east of the parking lot. The two Hickory trees appear to have died due to soil compaction caused by vehicles parking on the trees' roots, and the oak on the corner of the parking lot also appears to be suffering damage due to soil compaction. The suspected cause of death of the dead oak tree located outside the contractor parking lot could not be determined.

The second area inspected was northeast of the VA parking structure. This area is also a dirt parking lot and contains staff vehicles and VA emergency buses. City staff observed several dead Burr oak trees in this parking area. Vehicles have been parked on the roots of these trees and they also appear to have died due to soil compaction.

City staff and VA staff walked through the wooded area east of the VA parking structure and west of Fuller Road. This wooded area is owned in part by the VA and in part by the University of Michigan. The trees within this area are maintained as a natural ecosystem, and they appear to be in good health. This woodlot contains many large oak trees, including two Burr oaks that are just east of the VA Hospital entrance off Fuller Road and these trees also appear to be in good health.

While the City does not have jurisdiction over trees on the VA or University properties, city staff provided multiple recommendations to VA staff to address the dead trees and to preserve and protect remaining trees on their property. The VA staff was receptive to suggestions provided by city staff.

Appendix 'D' includes a report from the City forester, maps related to the Burr Oak grove, and related information.