



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

DATE OF MEETING: April 7, 2025

ITEM TITLE: Chapter 69 Parking Regulations

DISCUSSION:

During the March 10th Regular City Council Meeting, modifications to Chapter 69 – Parking Regulations were considered via ordinance and were set for the second reading.

This item was tabled during the meeting, and the Council requested a revisit for additional discussion of various topics, including overnight parking restrictions and permit issuance related to this issue.

During the March 17th City Council Work Session, additional discussion took place, and most items related to this were resolved with general guidance to Staff on how to move forward.

Additional discussion is needed regarding overnight parking along streets in the Downtown area, excluding Main Street.

Chief Niedert has included the following information for the Council to consider:

I wanted to ensure that the information regarding the overnight parking ordinance for the downtown area is clear about what we are attempting to achieve with this change.

- Approximately a year ago, Nikki Barth, Chamber of Commerce Director, reached out to me to try to find a solution to problems with downtown parking. The issues that she and other business owners were trying to address were the overnight parking during seven and a half months of the year and time limits for downtown parking. The problem was twofold: business owners and employees parking on the street all day and overnight. I presented several alternatives on the timed parking issue to the Council, along with the related costs (parking meters, etc.). The conclusion of that meeting was not to install any meters or regulating equipment but to move forward with ordinances that would enhance downtown parking.*
- These ordinance changes were not put forward to assist with anything other than better parking for patrons of downtown businesses. The benefit of the no overnight parking year-round will be easier access for plant watering, but it is not dependent on that.*
- These suggested ordinance changes, a 2-hour limit and no overnight parking, go hand-in-hand. Without the year-round overnight parking ordinance, the 2-hour limit becomes less enforceable. Without overnight parking restrictions, someone could park overnight, leave the vehicle on the street, and, once the two-hour parking rule takes effect, essentially avoid enforcement until noon.*
- Apartment residents and overnight employees downtown already must park in parking lots for four and a half months out of the year, so these changes to parking year-round should not be an issue. The change would be to not park on the streets during the period from April 1st through November 15th, which is a more pleasant time weather-wise, so as not to create a more significant hardship.*

- *A suggestion was made that this would encourage people to drink and drive to avoid a parking ticket by leaving a vehicle. Currently, patrons of establishments are issued parking tickets for four and a half months out of the year for leaving their vehicles, so that would not change. There is ample parking available in the parking lots adjacent to the licensed alcohol establishments. The Police Department has always stressed personal responsibility and planning when consuming alcohol, and we maintain that advice.*
- *These ordinance changes are not being made because of any individual business or apartments but rather for the long-term strategic planning as our downtown continues to thrive.*

There are still modifications that need to be made to the attached Ordinance based on the previous discussion at the March 17th City Council Work Session. However, given that further discussion is ongoing, Staff did not want to spend time making those modifications until a final plan is in place.

The items still to be added to the attached ordinance include provisions regarding snow emergencies and their implementation in parking lots, allowing parking in downtown lots for up to 48 hours, permitting for downtown tenants, and other related matters.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.