



March 6, 2015

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Thank you for your letter of January 28, 2015 (attached) regarding the next phase of development of the Downtown Park (DTP), and its' parking plan. The DTP has been planned since 1984. In 1997, a Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) convened by the Council considered among other factors, parking. The result of the CAC regarding parking was as follows:

*“the recommendations.....are aimed at providing adequate parking for the everyday uses of the park while maximizing the amount of land that can be used for park purposes, as originally intended in the purchase of this land. The park should not be used to solve the parking problems associated with surrounding land uses.”*

This policy has been followed ever since, including for the “closing the circle” scheduled to begin summer 2015. While there is evidence that parking problems in Old Bellevue exist, the most recent parking study regarding the DTP shows that the DTP has sufficient parking for its own use, and produces a surplus of 50-60 spaces the vast majority of the time for non-park use.

Your January 28 letter requests the following issues be addressed prior to any changes in the DTP:

*“Take an active interdepartmental approach to review of the proposed plans and alternatives to achieve multiple objectives of various departments and address concerns of the public.”*

The Directors of Planning, Transportation, Development Services, Parks, and a Deputy City Manager have reviewed all the reports, letters, and materials submitted on the project. According to their review of the independent parking consultant analysis, the DTP parking plan complies with the city policy which had substantial public process. The Parks Department will hold a public open house on the next phase of the DTP development in March 2015 to answer any additional questions.

*“Update the Park Master Plan EIS and Gibson DTP Parking Study. The update should reassess traffic and parking and specifically consider: 1) current and future growth and land use patterns around the DTP, and 2) changes to the park design and uses, including the NE Corner Gateway, Inspiration Playground, includes community desire for greater size/frequency of park events, and inclusion of “active” park uses.”*

Development of a Park Master Plan is the mechanism by which parks are established. Park master planning is undertaken with a long-term vision in mind because park facilities contemplated by a plan are often developed in phases over the course of many years or decades. The appropriate level of environmental review will be assessed by City of Bellevue Development Services as part of our plan and project review. The DTP Parking Study conducted in 2013 is based on current parking policies and project impacts. Based on no fatal flaw having been found in the DTP Parking Study, there is no compelling reason to do a second Parking Study on the DTP before proceeding with closure of the circle. Conducting additional studies would affect the planned completion of the DPT and building the Imagination Playground, possibility risking grant funding and escalating costs. Park rules for reserved and special events that exceed 150 attendance require individual parking management plans to mitigate impacts. In the future, should additional parking be needed at the Downtown Park, a structured parking option at the west parking facilities is not foreclosed.

*“Perform a detailed analysis to determine the construction costs and timing impacts of parking alternatives to ensure adequate public parking.”*

The current analysis demonstrates that the planned DTP parking is more than sufficient for its average peak uses. The Park Department conducted a preliminary analysis of the feasibility of adding an additional 50 stalls to the parking on 100<sup>th</sup>, beyond the needs of average park peak use, in partnership with a business sponsor for non-park users. No interest was expressed in this option, dropping it from further consideration. Moreover, such a project would require the City to amend its policy of limiting parking use for DTP users.

*“Develop and adopt a well-defined public parking policy prior to any changes at the DTP.”*

Public parking policy reaches beyond the DTP and even Old Bellevue. However, with the DTP current construction schedule, there is a full year to develop and adopt such policies.

*“Involve the public and stakeholders in the implementation process so they have an opportunity to identify issues, concerns, and solutions in a way that provides productive input to the city.”*

The DTP went through extensive public input during the Master Plan process in the 1980's and 1990's, including a CAC. More recently, in 2014, Parks' staff presented the park project to the Down Town Residents Association, twice to the OBMA, the Park Board, the BDA, and an Open House is being scheduled in March 2015 where additional questions can be answered regarding implementation.

Additional measures will or already have been taken in part to ease the parking stress resulting from the various current and planned public and private construction projects in the area.

- a. In 2014, the Transportation Department added capacity for an additional 25 spaces of on-street parking in Old Bellevue, 20 of which are adjacent the park parking lot along 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.
- b. The Parks Department will phase the construction of the "Complete the Circle" project in order to keep some parking in the South East corner lot available as long as possible during construction.
- c. Previously, at the request of OBMA, the park rules were modified to allow for general public parking after 6pm.
- d. For 2015, park rules for reserved and special events that exceed 150 in attendance require individual parking management plans to mitigate impacts.

*"Determine if convenient public transportation alternatives appropriately service the park and surrounding areas."*

This work can be done at the same time the parking policy referenced in above.

The City is committed to provide better public information regarding the plan for the DTP implementation and parking with respect to completion of the circle and addition of the Inspiration Playground, including the fact that future additions of parking to the DTP, if needed, are not precluded.

Please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Patrick Foran  
Director, Bellevue Parks & Community Services

cc: Council Councilmembers  
Parks & Community Services Board  
Bellevue Downtown Association  
Brad Miyake, City Manager  
Pam Bissonnette, Interim Deputy City Manager

Patrick Foran  
Director  
City of Bellevue Parks Department  
450 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE  
Bellevue, WA 98004

January 28, 2015

Dear Mr. Foran,

We, as neighboring stakeholders of the Downtown Park (DTP), request the opportunity to have productive input with an interdepartmental approach for its successful planning and completion. We are confident this signature DTP project can further enhance the local and regional appeal of both Downtown and Old Bellevue. However, as neighboring stakeholders, we strongly believe this expanded use and added appeal will compound an already difficult public parking situation in and around DTP. For this reason we believe there should be updated consideration of the economic and transportation impacts that includes public involvement in order to benefit Bellevue and improve user satisfaction.

Over two dozen local businesses, organizations, and community leaders have reviewed current DTP plans, and share the General Principles of Agreement, outlined below:

1. An observed current shortage of public parking supply in and around DTP already adversely affects residents, local businesses and property owners.
2. Planned DTP improvements and expansion (The NE Corner Gateway and Inspiration Playground) and expected city growth should all be considered to determine future public parking demand and define an adequate supply. Park use and city growth far outstrip factors that were considered in the Park Master Plan EIS or Gibson Parking Study.
3. Parking management can, and should be, improved in the park. To date, stakeholders have received mixed messages on parking management and monitoring.
4. DTP contains viable options for additional public parking.
5. Parking must be in close proximity to its uses.
6. There was very little public outreach and awareness about the parking plan in the "Complete the Circle" project. A concerted effort should be made to include input from residents, businesses and property owners prior to finalizing the DTP expansion plans.
7. Many users do and will drive from other parts of the city and region to enjoy the park. Convenient public transportation alternatives are limited to bring users to the park and surrounding areas.

Prior to any changes at DTP, we request the following actions be taken by the city immediately in 2015 to address the current and future DTP parking needs in the appropriate way.

1. Take an active interdepartmental approach to review the proposed plans and alternatives to achieve multiple objectives of various departments and address concerns of the public.
2. Update the Park Master Plan DS and Gibson Parking Study. This update should reassess traffic and parking and specifically consider: 1) current and future growth and land use

3. patterns around DTP, and 2) changes to the park design and uses, including the NE Corner Gateway, Inspiration Playground, increased community desire for greater size/frequency of park events and inclusion of “active” park uses.
3. Perform a detailed analysis to determine the construction costs and timing impacts of parking alternatives to ensure adequate public parking.
4. Develop and adopt a well-defined public parking policy prior to any changes at DTP.
5. Involve the public and stakeholders in the implementation process so they have an opportunity to identify issues, concerns and solutions in a way that provides productive input to the city.
6. Determine if convenient public transportation alternatives appropriately service the park and surrounding areas.

Based on discussion city-wide there are high level supporters not represented in this letter who also would like to see further consideration for parking in the Downtown Park. We recognize that the traffic and public parking problem in and around Old Bellevue is not simply a Parks Department issue. However, as Downtown Bellevue grows both in size and popularity, patrons and businesses partially rely on the parking relief provided by DTP. Our desire is for the Parks Department to step back, collaborate with its neighbors and other City departments, and help develop a comprehensive public parking solution for the DTP and surrounding area.

Sincerely,  
Downtown Park Neighborhood Stakeholders

Don Booth  
DON BOOTH (Jan 19, 2015)

Don Booth, President  
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Heidi Pickard  
Heidi Pickard (Jan 26, 2015)

Heidi Pickard, President  
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Joseph Brazen (Jan 25, 2015)

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cc: Brad Miyake, Bellevue City Manager;  
Bellevue City Council