

September 11, 2024

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Sheryl M.M. Long, City Manager

202402016

Subject: Ordinance – OTR North Special Permit Parking Area

Attached is an Ordinance captioned:

REPEALING Ordinance No. 36-2022 passed by Council on November 30, 2022 and Ordinance No. 381-2020 passed by Council on December 16, 2020, and **NOTWITHSTANDING** certain provisions of Cincinnati Municipal Code Sections 514-3 “Designation of Restricted Parking Area,” 514-5 “Residential Parking Permits Criteria,” and 514-7, “Permit Types, Qualifications and Fees,” **DESIGNATING** a portion of the Over-The-Rhine neighborhood, the area bounded by the east side of Central Parkway (Northbound) from Liberty Street to Mohawk Place, the south side of Mohawk Place from Central Parkway to Vine Street, the east side of Vine Street (northbound) from West McMicken Avenue to East Clifton Avenue, the west side of East Clifton Avenue from Vine Street to Main Street, the east side of Main Street (Southbound) from East Clifton Avenue from Vine Street to Main Street, the east side of Main Street (southbound) from East Clifton Avenue to Liberty Street, the north side of Liberty Street from Main Street to Central Parkway, as a Special Parking Permit Area (“SPPA”), for which residential parking permits are to be issued to residents of the SPPA for an annual permit fee, and to residents of rent-subsidized housing in the SPPA for a discounted annual permit fee.

STATEMENT

OTR North experienced a trend of historic disinvestment in the 1990s to early 2000s that only began to reverse recently. Chronic disinvestment in an area leads to resident exodus and the loss of businesses and visitors, all creating an environment for low parking demand of the public curb use. Over the last several years, Cincinnati has increased investment in OTR North, particularly in bringing housing online, strengthening businesses, nurturing community spaces, resources, and more. Due to reinvestment in properties within this area, demand for the use of the public right of way has increased and will continue to increase as OTR North (and Cincinnati, more generally) experience less population decline, and achieve expected, healthy, levels of population growth.

In response to direction from City Council, the Parking Division of the Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED”) has spent over a year constructing a thoughtful, multi-faceted parking plan (referred to as an “SPPA”) [**ATTACHMENT A: CURB USE MAP FOR INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION**] that addresses the many competing needs of all stakeholders, integrating best practices, community feedback, and

subject expertise. Not proceeding with SPPA designation will result in residents, visitors, and businesses continuing to compete for limited spaces on a first come first serve basis rather than thoughtfully restricting spaces within the district to serve the needs of these groups, which is untenable to a healthy neighborhood environment.

ATTACHMENT A: CURB USE MAP FOR INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION

BACKGROUND

In November of 2022, City Council adopted Motion [202202004](#) which asked the Administration to devise a comprehensive on-street usage plan in Over-the-Rhine north of Liberty Street akin to the south Over-The-Rhine Special Permit Parking Area (“SPPA”) which allocates curb space appropriately as metered parking, residential parking etc. The Administration provided Report [202300704](#) to Council in March of 2023 which established a timeline for reviewing the potential parameters of an SPPA and engaging with relevant stakeholders like the Corporation for Findlay Market, OTR Chamber, and OTR Community Council.

What is an SPPA?

A SPPA is an area of mixed residential and commercial use zoning where there is substantial demand for on-street parking between residents, businesses, and visitors and the designation of portions of the zone as residential parking only, flex parking that can be utilized by residential permit or as paid-parking-only areas to balance competing demands.

The dominant zoning type within the OTR North study area evaluated for an SPPA is a commercial zoning type (CC-P or CC-A) and urban mixed with some residential zoning, parks, and recreation designated areas and manufacturing general. Within an area like OTR North where the zoning type is predominantly uses that are not solely residential, an SPPA allows for the designation of residential parking areas on more streets than would otherwise be permitted under Cincinnati Municipal Code 514-5 which defines eligible parking areas for resident-only parking. An SPPA can be developed to balance the needs of businesses, visitors, and residents by designating areas for paid parking, resident parking, and flex parking (where residents can always park with a pass and during certain hours the parking is also available to all for payment as public parking).

Stakeholder Engagement on a proposed SPPA for OTR North

The City Administration began engaging with stakeholders on a possible OTR North SPPA in the late spring of 2023. An outline of engagement and relevant milestones in developing the proposed map that would be implemented upon passage of the proposed SPPA is as follows:

- May 2023 – Outreach by email to Findlay Market, OTRCC representatives, and OTR Chamber to obtain feedback on what curb uses the Administration should propose on particular streets within OTR North.
- May 2023 – June 2023 – The Administration completes a curb inventory of OTR North allowing for the creation of a map to implement an SPPA.

- July 2023 – August 2023 – 1st draft of map rolled out to OTR stakeholders including Findlay Market, OTRCC, and OTR Chamber. Administration attended and presented 1st draft of the map for feedback to each organization including the OTR Community Council board of trustees and general body. Written feedback was provided by the Corporation for Findlay Market and verbal feedback was provided by OTRCC and OTR Chamber at respective meetings.
- October 2023 – Public Community Engagement meeting facilitated by the Department of City Planning & Engagement to obtain feedback on the 1st draft of the map.
- November 2023 – February 2024 – Administration review of feedback on the first draft of the map and creation of the second draft
- February 2024 – April 2024 – 2nd draft of the map was rolled out to OTR stakeholders including Findlay Market, OTRCC, and OTR Chamber. The administration attended and presented the 1st draft of the map for feedback to each organization including the OTR Community Council board of trustees and general body. Written feedback was provided by the OTR Community Council and Corporation for Findlay Market.
- May 2024 – August 2024 – The administration reviewed comments on the 2nd draft of the map and hired Desman Inc. to review curb utilization and evaluate whether the worker parking program could be included within the SPPA. The conclusion of Desman’s report recommends that worker parking not be included in an SPPA due to high demand by other stakeholder groups for on-street parking. Desman recommended further investigation of under-utilized off-street parking for worker parking accommodations.
- August 2024 – A 3rd draft of the map rolled out to stakeholders in anticipation of proceeding to City Council. Presentation to OTR Community Council on the third draft of the map and the Administration’s recommendation on the potential SPPA improving the parking environment in OTR North.

Through this engagement process, the Administration received feedback on two drafts of maps outlining proposed residential, flex, and paid parking area designations within OTR North upon adoption of an SPPA. Feedback from residents, business owners, and other members of the public shaped the anticipated implementation plan of an SPPA for OTR North up for approval.

In addition, this feedback resulted in the Administration engaging Desman Inc. to review the potential for an employee parking program for workers within OTR North. While Desman’s report did not culminate in recommending a worker parking permit program due to the high existing demand for the public right of way from residents and businesses, it did recommend alternative ways of addressing this issue, reviewing opportunities to utilize underutilized off-street parking infrastructure in the vicinity of OTR North for worker parking.

Stakeholder feedback through the engagement process also led the Administration to review potential signage in the public ROW that would better direct visitors to off-street parking options available within OTR North. This review of signage is ongoing, and the Administration presently believes this can be completed within existing City resources. Finally, the Administration is reviewing the meter rates and meter hours based on public

engagement feedback to ensure the hours and rates encourage turnover while also meeting the various stakeholder needs of the area.

BASIS FOR IMPLEMENTING A SPPA

With the exception of Findlay Market, OTR North experienced a trend of historic disinvestment in the 1990s to early 2000s that only began to reverse recently. Chronic disinvestment leads to resident exodus and loss of businesses and visitors, all creating an environment for low parking demand. Over the last several years, Cincinnati has increased investment in OTR North, particularly in bringing housing online, strengthening businesses, nurturing community spaces, resources, and more. Due to reinvestment in properties within this area, demand for use of the public right of way has increased and will continue to increase.

In particular, the City encouraged vacant building renovations. Redevelopment of vacant buildings throughout OTR North is a benefit to all stakeholders of OTR North as occupied buildings bring new residents that frequent local businesses and new businesses that bring activity to storefront spaces throughout the business day, while also decreasing crime and dangerous activity. By seeking the redevelopment of City-owned vacant buildings or land acquired due to disinvestment by private landowners, these efforts were ultimately successful, resulting in new residences (single-family and multi-family), new residents, and new businesses.

Because many of these buildings were vacant for more than 20 years and had facilitated a negative environment around them, the demand for the use of the public right of way adjacent to them was also lessened, giving a false sense of expectations regarding the normal expectations for usage of a public curb near a nationally renowned outdoor market. As these properties have been transformed into productive use, the demand for use of the public right of way has drastically increased and will keep increasing as OTR North (and Cincinnati, more generally) reverses the past trend of population decline, and achieves expected, healthy, levels of population growth.

As more people live in OTR North and frequent businesses in OTR North, the parking demand is higher, and measures must be taken to match this new reality. Recent construction of a 513-car public parking garage by Hamilton County has provided additional opportunity for public parking (resident, business and visitor) to help meet this demand. With construction of the garage completed in late 2023 and occupancy data available, implementation of an SPPA will further assist in balancing demand for the on-street parking spaces among these competing groups.

The current use of the public ROW in OTR North is largely unrestricted parking available to all at all hours of the day; a situation only possible in low-density, low-demand, often disinvested-in neighborhoods. Based on the current use of the ROW analysis performed by Desman Inc., the unrestricted parking is not meeting the demand of the various groups as designated paid, flex, and residential spaces brought by an SPPA would provide for the area. Implementing an SPPA facilitates the turnover of parking spaces due to parking payment for non-residents; furthermore, the designation of residential areas ensures parking for residents in residential and non-business areas while freeing up

parking for visitors and business-related parking in commercial areas adjacent to the area.

A thoughtfully organized plan for use of the public right of way addresses parking demand for *everyone*, especially residents, as it allows residents parking options in the public ROW in *addition* to off-street parking options they may have at their residence or in privately owned parking facilities, like the recently constructed Hamilton County garage.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends creating a SPPA for OTR North. This will allow the Administration to designate the area for flex parking and residential parking within this area and allow the Administration to issue permits for residents to park within these designated areas. The Administration also intends to install parking payment infrastructure within OTR North which will facilitate parking turnover for visitor and business-related parking within paid parking areas. These parking areas within the public ROW will be reviewed periodically and adjusted as needed to most effectively meet overall stakeholder demand.

The Administration recommends approval of this Ordinance.

CC: Markiea L. Carter, Director, Department of Community & Economic Development

Attachment

