<u>MEMORANDUM</u>

TO: Joan Shannon, City Council President
        Burlington City Councilors
        Mayor Miro Weinberger

FROM: David E. White, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning

DATE: Wednesday, February 12, 2014

RE: Downtown Parking Amendment (ZA-13-06)

For your consideration you will please find in your packet a proposed amendment to the *Burlington Comprehensive Development Ordinance* for your consideration and adoption as recommended by the Burlington Planning Commission and the Council Ordinance Committee.

This amendment (ZA-13-06 – Downtown Parking) proposes to eliminate the on-site parking requirements within the Downtown Parking District. Current maximum parking limits (125% of the Neighborhood Parking District requirement) as well as bike parking requirements are proposed to remain unchanged. This amendment also unencumbers existing development from parking requirements imposed under past zoning permits in order for underutilized parking spaces to be shared across properties in support of both existing and new development. This is a critical step in ensuring the success of the new Downtown Parking Initiative and their ability to test several pilot projects.

The intent of this amendment is to facilitate new infill development in the core of our city and is one of the flagship recommendations of ***planBTV: Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan***. As proposed, this amendment will:

- encourage more productive and valuable use of limited land in our downtown and thereby improving the taxbase;

- improve our ability to protect, maintain and even restore the urban fabric and character of our downtown;

- make our downtown more walkable and pedestrian-friendly, and provide much greater support for alternatives such as walking, biking, transit and car sharing;

- facilitate more efficient use of underutilized existing parking *(35% or ~3,100 vacant parking spaces downtown at any given time);*

- make new development less expensive *(parking costs $20-30k per structured space)*;

- make it easier to create more housing and particularly affordable housing (parking increases the cost of housing by 15-30%.); and,

- provide much greater flexibility and creativity in how we manage the supply and demand for parking and transportation.

The creation of more parking that is absolutely necessary runs counter to nearly **all** of the objectives we have for our downtown like making our downtown more:

- o walkable and pedestrian-friendly;

- o economically vital with an active street-level experience for all;

- o transit-supportive; and,

- o cleaner and greener

This proposal is about increasing choice and flexibility, and does NOT mean that no more parking will ever be built in our downtown - either by private developers or the City. Instead the creation of more parking should be driven by actual market forces and the ability of users willing to pay for it.

Why such a change?

On-site parking requirements have been a staple of local zoning ordinances for 50 years. However, there is a growing consensus around the country that this is actually <u>one of zoning's biggest mistakes</u>. There is a rapidly growing body of research, perspective and policy change among urban planners, designers, economists, traffic engineers, researchers, and decision-makers around the country focused on reforming how communities regulate and manage parking - especially in mixed-use downtown areas like ours.

Many communities around the country have, or are in the process of, eliminating minimum on-site parking requirements in at least part of their community including:

Austin, TX	Boston, MA
Cincinnati, OH	Coral Gables, FL
Eugene, OR	Fort Myers, FL
Fort Pierce, FL	Ithaca, NY
Ipswich, MA	Los Angeles, CA
Milwaukee, WI	New York, NY
Olympia, WA	Portland, OR
San Francisco, CA	Stuart, FL
Seattle, WA	Spokane, WA
United Kingdom (entire nation)	Washington, DC

Early adopters, and those communities that never imposed the parking requirements in the first place, have successfully demonstrated that it can have a very positive effect on downtown vitality contrary to popular belief. Here in Burlington elimination of on-site parking requirements will work hand-in-hand with a robust collection of parking management strategies to address access to parking, its cost and support for alternative modes be implemented by the new Downtown Parking Initiative.

Thank you for your consideration.