



CHURCH STREET
MARKETPLACE

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City Proposes Validation Program at Marketplace Garage to Replace Two-Hour Free Parking

Two-hours free to remain unchanged at nearby Lakeview and College Street garages

Burlington, Vt. (June 26, 2020) – On June 17, the Department of Public Works (DPW) Commission unanimously approved a [memo](#) proposing broad changes to how the municipal garages are run in Burlington. The most high profile change is the replacement of 2-hours free at Marketplace Garage with a validation program. DPW staff is recommending to delay the implementation until January 1, 2021 to ensure a smooth rollout and will be discussing this with the Public Works Commission at their next meeting to seek their concurrence.

“We understand this is a big change for visitors to our downtown,” said Chapin Spencer, director of the Department of Public Works. “Although the financial realities of Covid-19 were the catalyst for this change, the economic impact of Covid-19 on the businesses in our downtown also dictated that the rollout be managed and scheduled appropriately. Therefore, we will be working with the downtown merchant community to ensure that this transition will be seamless.”

The removal of 2-hours free at Marketplace Garage was a top-level recommendation in the [Downtown Parking and Transportation Management plan](#), created in 2015 by Desman parking consultants, to build a sustainable financial model in the municipal garages.

The memo, submitted by Jeff Padgett, interim assistant director of parking and traffic, stated that the Marketplace Garage typically operates over capacity causing closures 2-3 times a day, 3-5 days per week. The rollout of a rate adjustment at the Marketplace Garage will be considered only when parking rates return to these historic levels.

“The removal of two-hours free at Marketplace should encourage a measurable percentage of parkers to seek out the Lakeview and College Street garages for two-hours free and relieve the pressure on the Marketplace Garage,” said Padgett. “It should increase turnover, decrease the amount of downtown employees ‘cycling’ every few hours, and decrease the amount of times we have to close the facility every day.”

Other changes presented in the policy memo include: a simplification of the rate structure at Lakeview and College Street garages (\$1 an hour), lost tickets now cost \$20 (up from \$10) in both facilities, and the authority to establish temporary rates with DPW Commission approval. Several of the proposed changes were working policies that hadn’t been codified in ordinance, such as free overnight parking during snow bans and free parking on city-recognized holidays.

“The merchants on the Church Street Marketplace are pleased to hear that this program will not be rolling out immediately,” said Kara Alnasrawi, executive director of the Church Street Marketplace. “In these unprecedented times, our locally-owned small businesses need to offer visitors every incentive possible to come downtown.”



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To further support the restart of business in the downtown, the city is currently running a free parking program for restaurant and retail workers at the Lakeview and College Street garages. More info can be found on ParkBurlington.com.

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