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PRESS RELEASE

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Parking Tickets Fight Food Insecurity

Burlington, VT – On Monday night, Burlington City Council approved the ‘*Fines for Food*’ pilot program. Through January 15, 2022 the City will donate 50% of payments for overdue parking tickets to the not-for-profit Feeding Chittenden to help in the fight against food insecurity. As a tireless advocate in addressing food insecurity, Ward 6 Councilor Karen Paul worked with the Administration and the Department of Public Works (DPW) to craft this pilot program. With over \$800K in eligible overdue fines the community has a great opportunity to clear overdue tickets and make a meaningful contribution towards fighting hunger.

“Having adequate food is a basic human need that no one should be without,” **said Ward 6 City Councilor Karen Paul.** “Too many in our community face hunger and food insecurity, a great many of them are children. I am grateful to DPW for their partnership on developing this program. I hope many who have outstanding tickets will take this opportunity to pay their tickets, and in the process, contribute to improving the lives of our neighbors in need in our community. Many thanks to Feeding Chittenden for the critical work they do in the mission to address hunger by feeding and cultivating opportunities through their food shelf, hot meals program, homebound delivery, and community kitchen academy.”

“Feeding Chittenden is committed to ensuring no one in our region goes without food,” **said Rob Meehan, Director of Feeding Chittenden.** “The pandemic has created new hardships and our response has been to pivot as an organization and deliver emergency food and look for innovative solutions to alleviate hunger. DPW’s pay it forward type initiative supports keeping transportation available to folks while also helping to feed people.”

Overdue parking tickets can be paid online at <http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/dpw/parking> or by stopping by the municipal building at 645 Pine Street during business hours (8:00-4:00

Monday-Friday). For those who have no overdue fines, but wish to contribute to Feeding Chittenden, please visit <https://feedingchittenden.org/>.

“We are excited to work with Councilor Paul and Feeding Chittenden. Food insecurity is a critical issue and we all play a role in helping those most in need,” **said Jeff Padgett, Director of the Parking and Traffic Division at DPW.** “In addition, it is our hope that this donation will encourage those with overdue tickets to pay them off prior to the return of scoff enforcement at the beginning of February. Under the new, reformed scoff ordinance, accounts with \$275 or more in fines will be subject to impoundment. This is an opportunity for all of us to pull together, avoid impoundment and direct resources to a great cause.”

A NEW PARKING EXPERIENCE IN BURLINGTON AND SCOFF LAW REFORM

In 2021, DPW completed its reorganization of Parking Services to create a one-stop-shop for all parking needs. The new Parking Services Office has a greater emphasis on customer experience and innovation for products, services, safety and enforcement. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the City stopped enforcing its scoff law which had an impoundment threshold of only \$75 in overdue parking fines. Recently, the DPW Commission approved raising this to \$275 to be more equitable while still encouraging parking compliance. The impoundment of vehicles in scoff will resume on February 1, 2022.

The *Fines for Food* pilot program was created to dovetail with the return of scoff enforcement to:

- Create a positive experience while resolving overdue parking tickets
- Reduce exposure to impoundment (resulting from scoff violation)
- Take a concrete action to address food insecurity in our community
- Unlock otherwise lost revenue for the city
- Test the effectiveness of such a program
- Identify improvement opportunities and/or limitations of program

Questions on the pilot program? Contact Jeff Padgett, Division Director of Parking & Traffic at 802-540-2380

Feeding Chittenden works to alleviate hunger by feeding people and cultivating opportunities. As the largest direct service emergency food provider in Vermont, Feeding Chittenden serves over 12,000 people each year. Feeding Chittenden is a Program of [The Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity \(CVOEO\)](#).

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