

# Fan Restricted Parking District

## White Paper

Prepared February, 2005

### Fan Restricted Parking District – Background

The Fan Restricted Parking District was created in 1977 by Traffic Order 2475 and amended by Traffic Order 2483 in November of the same year. The original need for a parking district was forced by the geographic location of the Fan District and its proximity to Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and Stuart Circle Hospital both of which placed a large parking burden on the residential neighborhood. In addition, on the northern boundary of the district lies a densely popular area of multi-family housing zoned R-48 and R-73 and a B-4 district which has no parking requirements except for dwelling unit. Add to this that the deficit of university housing which created a demand for the conversion of many single-family houses to non-conforming use housing in the R-6 district from 1970 through the late 1980s.

The residential parking district has grown over the years and now extends as far west as Allen Ave and included of 75 block-faces in the Fan District, most of which fall in the area described as the lower-fan.

Stuart Circle Hospital closed their doors in 1999 and the building has since been converted to apartments and office space with sufficient parking to support their needs and has eased some of the demand for parking in western end of the district during the day, however the evening is a different story.

VCU on the other had continues to grow with a student enrollment of 26,000 up from 14,000 in 1992. While VCU has continued to add off-street parking they are keeping pace with the growth. Presently VCU has 2,032<sup>1</sup> off-street parking space available to the public.

The neighborhood was further impacted in 1993 when the City created a Parking Overlay District (PO3)<sup>2</sup> along the Main Street corridor from Meadow St to Harrison St. The assumption being that Urban Business require less parking because the business serve the neighborhood and residents either walk or take public transportation.

### History of City Parking Contract

The City awarded its first parking contract on July 1, 1998 (Contract #98185-1) to Central Parking Systems of Virginia. The contract was for 3-year with up to 2 1-year options. The initial contract with Central Parking expired in July of 2002; however was extend until July 2004 until the new contract was awarded to Lanier Parking Systems. During the extension the City issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) # H04061 on October 24, 2003, with a closing date of December 10, 2003. The contract was awarded in June 2004 and protested by Central Parking almost immediately.

The City's Procurement Review Board recommended that the award be set-aside and the Contract re-bid. It seems that the City's Senior Procurement Officer, since retired, fail to make the Minority Business participation a requirement but rather an optional part

(1) Source: A Comprehensive Strategic Parking Plan for the City of Richmond, page 15, Desman 6/2002

(2) Source: City Council Paper 93-162-142A adopted 6/14/93

(3) Source: A Comprehensive Strategic Parking Plan for the City of Richmond, page 18, Desman 6/2002

(4) Source: Traffic Order #2483, November 1, 1977, paragraph VI, sub-paragraph A

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of the procurement. Fortunately for the City the losing contractor understood the policy and took appropriate action.

The contract was re-issued on September 24, 2004, one-week later than anticipated. The contract closed on October 20, 2004 and was rejected by Mayor Wilder in a Press Release February 7, 2005 much to the surprise of the public and specifically the Fan District Association whose member area accounts for about 30%, on average, of the citations issued in any given week.

## The Current Problem

Based on the delay of the award of a parking contract, estimated to be a minimum of 5 months there is an immediate need to provide enforcement at the level of performance required to meet resident expectations. This period will be extended if Lanier is not the successful bidder on the contract because it takes roughly 6-months to get a contractor to an acceptable level of performance.

Resident expectations are as follow:

- (1) Provide parking enforcement beginning at 07:00 and ending at 21:00 hours, Monday to Thursday in the restricted district
- (2) Provide parking enforcement beginning at 07:00 and ending at 18:00 hours, Friday in the restricted district
- (3) Provide the resources necessary for 1-hour beginning to end return coverage. This means that the officer marks the vehicle and returns to that vehicle in about 1-hour, or enforcement provide no incentive for violators to find legitimate and legal parking.
- (4) All parking infractions are addressed including:
  - Loading zones 0800-1800)
  - Passenger loading zones (7x24)
  - Blocking cross-walks
  - Parking too close to corner
  - Blocking alley entrances and driveways
  - Parking in NO PARKING zones
  - Parking an excessive distance from the curb
  - Parking in the alley.

*Many of these are safety issues in a densely populated neighborhood like the Fan.*

Presently the level of performance by Lanier Parking Systems has slipped in the following areas:

- Hourly coverage, especially evening hours and inclement weather
- Performance or productivity
  - Number of citation has slipped from 500-650 to 124-402
- Visibility – Enforcement needs to be more visible so resident are aware of activity

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## **Additional Factors**

The Fan Restricted Parking District is presently the only neighborhood where residents have to pay a fee for the opportunity to compete for a parking space. In addition they have to purchase passes to accommodate visitor from 0700 Monday through Friday at 1800 hours.

Residents still must go down to City Hall annually to purchase their decals and visitor passes even though they have been promised for the last 2-3 years that a system would be forthcoming to eliminate this inconvenience and expense to the City.

To add one more complication, the Fan District has experienced double-digit property tax increases over the past several years; some that were long over due but some that were simply poor management through the assessor's office.

## **Looking to the Future**

There still remains much to be done to improve the quality of life in the Fan Restricted Parking District which exacerbates the limit parking availability, current inventory of 1-hour parking spaces in 1,000<sup>3</sup>. These items should become a priority and be addressed sooner than later and could help with the interim situation. They are:

- ✓ Audit the number of decals issued
- ✓ Develop, document and implement a more stringent decal issuance policy in Finance
- ✓ Enforce the required remove old decals from vehicles<sup>4</sup>
- ✓ Authorize and conducts a study of the problem of parking in the Fan today vs. the mid 1970, many factors have changed.
- ✓ The City should be managing the Parking District and it contractor proactively, not the Fan District Association and the residents of the Fan.

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