



January 3, 2019

The Honorable Byron W. Brown  
Mayor, City of Buffalo  
201 City Hall  
Buffalo, NY 14202

Honorable Members of the Common Council  
1413 City Hall  
Buffalo, NY 14203

Dear Mayor Brown and Members of the Common Council:

Buffalo Place Inc is pleased to submit herewith the results of a comprehensive, two-year examination of downtown access. A Buffalo Place committee (The Access and Infrastructure Committee) made up of some 50 or so downtown stakeholders, advocates and public sector officials has researched the access issue, considered options for improving access, and has crafted a set of recommendations, with a goal of supporting continued downtown occupancy and growth.

The Access and Infrastructure Committee heard from building owners, employers and realtors who emphasized that lack of sufficient parking is an impediment to increased downtown activity. The committee also heard from those that encouraged the leveraging of access alternatives, including public transit, bicycle, and shared automobile use (to name a few). The committee concluded that there is no silver bullet that solves the access issue. Rather, there is a need to advance a wide-ranging coordinated program that addresses both traditional and non-traditional access options.

Buffalo Place and the City worked together successfully from 1999 to 2004 to help support downtown growth with access improvements. Over 500 curb parking spaces were created and repriced. The Park'n Go Shuttle provided low-cost/high customer service parking for 1,800 cost sensitive downtown workers near the arena. A Try Transit initiative was funded and lured dozens of former drivers to public transit. And two city-owned ramps were expanded, providing 1,400 incremental parking spaces. This coordinated effort set the stage for over a decade of downtown growth, evidenced by nearly 4 million square feet of new buildings, an 800,000 square foot increase in occupied office space, a 1.2 million square foot reduction in vacant space, and some 1,500 additional individuals taking residence in downtown.

The access improvements that were put in place at the turn of the century have now been mostly absorbed and additional access capacity is needed to fuel continued private sector growth. The Access and Infrastructure Committee recommends that we:

- Find 1,000 New Ways to Access Downtown
  - Create 200 new curb parking spaces. Price curb spaces for high utilization and turnover. Every occupied curb space reduces demand for costly off-street parking capacity. When spaces do not generate enough income to cover meter and maintenance expenses, put them to work for downtown by allowing free parking.

- Convert 200 Parkers to Transit. Offer Try-Out Transit free passes and a no-risk return to monthly parking at BCAR facilities. Support use of pre-tax transit as a flex employee benefit, and encourage use of NFTA's Corporate Transit Pass volume discount by supporting an umbrella agency willing to package small company employees into an eligible 25+ member group.
- Offer a group price incentive to encourage 200 BCAR parkers to relocate to low-cost parking in the periphery of downtown.
- Open an additional 100 publicly available spaces by offering joint management and marketing of surplus, privately held parking spaces currently reserved for use by owners and tenants.
- Create a Carpool incentive program at BCAR facilities; offer the same program to private operators. Attract net loss of 50 cars.
- Use moderate price increases to create a price differential between core parking spaces and further locations to encourage relocation of 250 core parkers to available periphery spaces.
- Ensure availability of short duration daytime curbside parking by moderately increasing parking fees and enforcing two-hour meter limits.
- Build at least another 1,000 structured parking spaces in the Downtown Core. These spaces will be used most efficiently and intensively if they remain part of the shared, publicly operated and available parking supply.
- Use moderate increases in curbside and BCAR parking rates to better manage demand and flow the incremental revenue to an Access Fund dedicated to support access initiatives, including:
  - A Try Out Transit pass program
  - The conversion of BCAR parkers to transit with no-risk test passes
  - A reduced price carpool program.
  - The funding of an umbrella agency for small businesses to participate in NFTA's corporate transit pass program
  - The management of surplus, privately held off-street parking
  - The provision of public bicycle storage in secure room/lock-ups or lockers
  - The creation of a shuttle system to encourage park and ride between low cost lots/ramps on the downtown periphery and the Downtown Core area where there is a parking deficit

Find the complete Downtown Access Study and Appendices at this link:

<https://buffaloplaces.com/resources/project-information/access-and-infrastructure>. The committee thanks the city for its participation in this effort and stands ready to assist as may be required with the advancement of the above agenda. We look forward to helping position downtown for another decade of growth.

Very truly yours,



Keith M. Belanger  
Chairman