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July 19, 2011

Mayor Barouhk, Vice Mayor Snyder
and Members of City Council

City of Falls Church
300 Park Avenue
Falls Church, VA 22046

Dear Mayor Barouhk, Vice Mayor Snyder and Members of City Council:

Thank you very much for the time and attention you have devoted to the Falls Church Chamber of Commerce's business attraction and retention recommendations. While few of them have come to fruition yet, we are pleased with your interest in pursuing them.

We would like to add to our list of recommendations by encouraging the City to consider the provision of short term or "pick-up hot spot" public parking spaces for businesses who request them. Attached is information on the concept and our proposal to allow it in those cases when it can boost business and therefore tax revenue. The Chamber Board approved this idea unanimously.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation. Please let us know if you have any questions or if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sally D. Cole".

Sally D. Cole
Executive Director

Attachment

Chamber Proposal for Consideration of 15 Minute On-Street Parking, or “Pick Up Hot Spots”

Background:

Retail and Service Retail are ever evolving. The single biggest current trend continues to be “Multi-Channel Fulfillment” or in everyday speak, Order Online/Pick Up In Store. This allows consumers the luxury of a relaxed online experience with the instant gratification of a ‘Grab & Go’. While the move started modestly a few years ago, it continues to gain great momentum with an estimated 31% of 2010 holiday on-line orders alone picked up in-store. While certain types of businesses have always relied on the quick interaction, this order-elsewhere movement has also recently been exploited with great success by restaurants and others in the food industry.

Existing Conditions:

The City Of Falls Church has recently moved to partially rectify a lack of public parking lots and better enable business needs by implementing 2-hour on street parking zones in business areas. The GFCC believes that this can be enhanced with the addition a limited number of “Pick Up Hot Spot- 15 Minute Parking Only” in areas of service need around the City.

Benefit To Business:

Retailers who target Multi-Channel Fulfillment note the benefit of increasing sales without necessary committing to hard real estate costs. They are often able to capture an audience (and sales) from a base who might not normally visit, let alone linger in, a real world storefront. On-line shopping is often accompanied by telephone support allowing a personal closing and store-to-customer bond in a transaction that might not have happened otherwise.

Benefit To The City:

#1-Revenues. Retail Sales Tax and especially Meals Tax play an essential part of the annual City budget. Support of increased sales and meals tax has a large and direct impact on City revenues, decreasing the need for cuts or extraordinary tax collections. Sales & Meals tax revenues are unique in that they have an almost immediate impact on City revenues as they are paid to the City within a quarter of their collection.

#2- Business Retention and Development. By acknowledging & supporting the current trend, the City can indicate that it understands and supports business in a way that its neighbors do not yet. This perception can be furthered with contemporary labeling of the signs and program, i.e., “Pick Up Hot Spot- 15 Minute Parking Only”

#3-Safety. Business’ patrons currently work around the lack of Hot Spots by double parking, parking in Fire Lanes and otherwise presenting hazards to themselves and exponentially others. Relieving the pressure to circumvent the law will produce immediate positive increase in citizen safety.

Implementation:

A written request would be made to the City Manager’s office. This written request would include a map or drawing of the block and general area that the Hot Spot sign is being requested to be placed. The request can be reviewed by The City Manager’s office with advisement from The EDA and Engineering office and should be processed within 30 days of receipt.

Limits should be placed on the number of Hot Spot areas allowed, with a suggestion of a maximum of one per one hundred lineal feet (two per city block face). A flat fee of \$250 per approved spot shall be paid by the requestor to the City after approval and before sign erection to cover all associated costs.

Timing:

Immediate initiation. As the set up costs are negligible, the actual costs reimbursable, and the bottom line benefit to the City is great and immediate, the GFCC believes that this should be implemented yesterday.