



Department Source: Public Works

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: November 7, 2022

Re: Closure of the Uncovered Floors at 5<sup>th</sup> & Walnut and Short Street Garages During Winter Months.

## Executive Summary

Staff is providing notification to the Council on the Parking Utility's plan to block vehicular access to the uncovered portions of the 5<sup>th</sup> & Walnut garage and most of the uncovered portions of the Short Street garage starting December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and ending March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

## Discussion

Since 2017, the Parking Department has closed the uncovered portion of the 5<sup>th</sup> & Walnut garage on an annual basis. In doing so, it has allowed the department to prioritize snow removal efforts in other locations with heavier traffic and parking utilization. Historically, the primary year round use of the uncovered portion of the garage has been by a few City owned vehicles, with very few to no use by the public or personal vehicles. The overwhelming majority of these spaces goes unused during both business hours and free public hours. With the current consistent availability of space in the covered portions of the garage, no demand issues are created by asking parkers to utilize spaces below the uncovered portions of the garage. Moreover, because a cut through section exists prior to reaching the uncovered portions of the garage, motorists are easily able to pass from the upward direction of the garage to the downward direction of the garage without needing to use the uncovered section. Ensuring the uncovered area of this garage is clear of parked cars and traffic limits the need to combat snow events early in the process, freeing up our limited staff and resources to address other areas where there is a necessity to continue to allow traffic and parking in uncovered areas. Currently, the upper floors of the garage are inaccessible while the garage awaits safety measure installations on the windows of the garage; however, staff is requesting that the top floor continue to be barricaded through the winter months once the installations are complete and the current temporary walls removed.

Since 2018, the Parking Department has closed the majority of the uncovered portion of the Short Street garage on an annual basis. In doing so, it has allowed the department to prioritize snow removal efforts in other locations with heavier traffic and parking utilization. Historically, the primary year round use of the uncovered portion of the garage has been by very few permit holders, mostly those who are inhabiting the top two apartments on the north facing wall of the garage. The overwhelming majority of these spaces goes unused during both business hours and free public hours. With the current consistent availability of space in the covered portions of the garage, no demand issues are created by asking parkers to utilize spaces below the uncovered portions of the garage. That said, because there are reserved spaces in the lower portion of the uncovered area, parking utility only blocks off the spaces beyond those, leaving access to the reserved spaces for the apartment tenants and a handful



# City of Columbia

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of generic permit parking spaces. When blocking this area, cones and signs are used to designate the “no travel” line and space is created to allow vehicles to make easy u-turns to go back down through the garage. Ensuring the majority of the uncovered area of this garage is clear of parked cars and traffic limits the need to combat snow events early in the process, freeing up our limited staff and resources to address other areas where there is a necessity to continue to allow traffic and parking in all uncovered areas.

Going forward this practice will be adopted as part of our routine winter weather operations for 5<sup>th</sup> and Walnut and Short Street parking garages. This practice will make staff's response to winter events more efficient.

## Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: None  
Long-Term Impact: None

## Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impacts

### Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Public Safety, Secondary Impact: Secondary, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

### Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Not Applicable, Secondary Impact: Secondary, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

## Legislative History

Date	Action
12/06/2021	REP94-21 Closure of the Uncovered Floors of the Fifth and Walnut Street and the Short Street Municipal Parking Structures During the Winter Months.
12/07/2020	REP75-20 Closure of the Uncovered Floors of the Fifth and Walnut Street and the Short Street Municipal Parking Structures During the Winter Months.

## Suggested Council Action

For informational purposes only.