

[Narrator] You've tuned in to another
edition of The Breakroom, a

weekly conversation about how
the City of Saint Augustine

works from those who do the
work everyday. Hosted by the

City of Saint Augustine's
communications director,

Melissa Wissel. The Breakroom
offers a closer look at the

different city departments and
provides updates on current and

upcoming projects and events
and now your host Melissa

Wissel. [Melissa] Welcome to The
Breakroom. Thanks for tuning in

as we observe Mobility Week
promoting awareness of safe

multi-modal transportation
choices It's a good time to get

an update on the city's
mobility initiatives so I've

invited Assistant City Manager
Ruben Franklin to join us. He's

been leading the charge
focusing on mobility for the

city for quite some time. Of
course, in Saint Augustine,

it's mostly about
transportation and parking,

clearing the congestion and
finding efficient solutions to

help folks get into and around
the city. Reuben, welcome back.

[Rueben] Thanks for having me. [Melissa] I know
it's been a while. You've been

had a promotion to assistant
city managers so thanks for

coming in and talking with us

about of these mobility issues.

I want to go back a little bit
and recap but I also want to

get people's attention before
we start the interview. Stay

tuned because we are going to
be making an announcement about

some changes that are coming
November 6th. So, now that

I've put everybody on the edge
of their seats. Uh let's let's

do a little bit of a recap.
Mobility does always seem to be

a hot topic. Um Todd is our new
public works director. He

really does oversee that now
but I've brought you here in

just to give us a recap and
also to talk about those

upcoming changes. Remind us
where we got all you know all

of this came from with
mobility. You started out as

our first [Rueben] Mobility manager.

[Melissa] That's it. [Rueben] Uh well it started

with the city's vision plan
that was adopted where it

identified mobility as one of
the top initiatives that the

city should be actively
pursuing improvements to and

so from that it sent us on this
whole process of developing a

mobility division. Uh I got the
opportunity to be the first

mobility manager Xavier
Pellicer's our mobility manager

now and it also set us down the
path of looking at our comp

plan and making sure elements
of our comprehensive plan

included a long-range mobility
plan which we did not have. So,

we've checked all those boxes.
We've implemented a mobility

fee for new developments that
they pay into a fee that helps

with infrastructure
improvements around the city

and we got into this 'cuz we're
really popular place. [Melissa] Yeah. [Rueben] To

live and work and visit and
especially around our really

peak times. Nights of lights is
coming up and spring time we we

have a lot of visitors that
pass through and enjoy our city

and so mobility becomes really

important of how we move people

around the city. Not just in
their own personal vehicles but

a lot of times how can we get
them? We call it a park once

environment. How can we get
them to park one time and then

move around using bikes,
walking, transit, our new star

circulator. [Melissa] Yup. [Rueben] That's been
running is is part of the

equation and happy that we've
got that off the ground that's

been running out of the parking
garage and visitor center for a

few months now. [Melissa] And the the
star circulator, I do want to

make sure folks are aware of
that. It's a bright blue and

white bus. So, kind of that
courtesy van-looking vehicle.

[Rueben] And it's free. [Melissa] It's free. [Rueben] Free.

[Melissa] Air conditioned in the summer,

heated in the winter. [Rueben] Yes. [Melissa] As
you need it and it, like you

mentioned, picks up at the VIP.

It drops off there at the

corner kind of by the Fort and

River and Fort in front of

Mary's and then back around by

Saint George Street. [Rueben & Melissa] Cathedral

and Saint George. Um and that is

free like you said. Uh just

helps you get from the top of

Saint George to the bottom of

Saint George. Little bit

faster. [Rueben] That's right and that

it's just the first phase. Uh

we are anticipating of

expanding it. Um we have a
grant from the state that's

helping fund this project over
about the course of five years

and the idea is to make it
self-sustaining. Um the funding

goes away after five years but
we've had time to work out the

operational costs and budgeting
for that but the future of the

Star Circulator is not just
what you see now but eventually

maybe making a connection to
Saint Augustine Beach having

stops along Anastasia Boulevard
so people can get in the town

from the beach and vice versa
and then also the what's been

in the commission's been

deliberating lately is

developing a garage at the
Broudy site which is on the

corner of West King Street and
US one and where we build 750

car parking garage and the
circulator would run from that

point too. So getting people
parked in these garage

facilities and then having you
know transit a circulator you

can choose to use that walk,
bike, to get into the downtown

area. [Melissa] It's a lot of and that
that whole idea of the beach

has been a a question for many
years too. So I think that's

the other piece that's is these
things don't happen overnight.

So what we're talking about
here today we may be back in

another year talking about the
next phase of something. [Rueben] Yeah

the plan too with the beach is
to we just started running the

circulator in the downtown area
so now that we got our legs

under us there we're going to
start to talk about the next

expansion phase. Um the beach
makes sense so we're going to

reach out and talk to officials
at the beach and see what what

we can do to get something up
and running. What that looks

like. [Melissa] We were talking, you're
talking about parking and the

festivals and things, I do
want to touch on, we do have a

local resident discount option.

We have a mobile app and a park

now card. Give us a refresher
on the park now and how those

discounts work I should say
too. [Rueben] Yes, so if you're a

resident of St. Johns County,
you can apply for or the

resident discount and the
resident discount can either be

used through a park now card or
through our mobile app where

you go on prove that you're the
resident of Saint Johns County

and you get applied the
discount and the discount is

you pay \$3 per entry at the
parking garage or you pay 50

cents an hour to park on street

in one of our public flat lots

or on-street parking area. Um
so a lot of people just refer

to it as the park now card but
really it's it's a resident

discount. Discount. [Melissa] The mobile
app is really really the way to

go. [Rueben] Yes, the mobile app you use [Melissa] way
to go. [Rueben] Um eventually, the Park

Now Card itself is going to get
phased out. Um it's kind of old

technology. We're having issues
getting new cards but the

program's not going to go away.
Resident discount goes away.

It's just going to be a
different way of using it. Um

in the future, you'll just
apply for the resident

discount. Um prove your
resident of Saint John's County

and then you'll either be able
to use the mobile app or you'll

just walk up to a PayStation
and punch your license plate

number in. It will will
recognize as a permit for the

discount and then it will just
apply the rate. So in the

future you won't need the Park
Now card but we'll we'll put

plenty of public noticing out
there and if you do have a Park

Now card you'll be allowed to
spend down whatever balance is

on it. On it. [Melissa] The the Park Now
app. It's called that. It's

called Park Now. com. Uh or
[Rueben] Park Saint Aug. [Melissa] Sorry. Park

Saint Aug. We've we worked a
hard on that one. Park Saint

Aug. com. So if you are using
the mobile app or if you

haven't before that is where
you go to get your registration

information uploaded to submit
that to the mobile app. So if

you haven't done it yet, go
ahead and do that. If you are

just now tuning in, I have
Ruben Franklin in the break

room with me this week. He is
our assistant city manager.

We're talking about parking
transportation. It's mobility

week at the end of October.

Reuben, I did tease our

audience about the changes that

are coming. We were talking a

bit about although discounts.

Tell me about the changes that

are coming November sixth,

that's a Monday and we're

going to see some times of

enforcement In our parking

change and possibly something

at the parking garage changing.

[Rueben] Uh yes, that's correct. So,

with the new budget process, we

have approved new rates that

are going to go into effect

November sixth. Uh so, starting

with the parking garage, it's

going to be twenty dollars.

It's going to go from \$15 to

\$20 per entry. Uh the resident

discount stays the same. So, if

you have the Park Now Card or,
the resident discount, it's

\$three dollars per entry and
we're going to do \$20 per entry

from 7 AM to 5 PM and then
after 5 PM, it's going to drop

to \$5 dollars per entry and the
whole purpose of that is try to

in the evening time get more
people to park in the parking

garage use the circulator with
the exception of events so in

our really peak times nights of
lights will have an events

calendar out there that it will
be \$20 per entry during events

when we're running shuttling
kind of on the periphery of the

city then the parking garage
itself will be \$20 per entry

from 7 to 9 PM but outside of
events will be 20 from seven to

5 PM and then once 5 PM hits
it's going to drop to \$5 and

then our on-street parking
we're going to extend the pay

times from 5 PM it's going to
be paid parking for on street

and our flat lots all the way
to 9 PM now and we're also

going to institute Sundays from
1 PM to 9PM will be paid

parking we'll leave the
mornings free for you know our

residents and citizens that are
going to church and on Sunday

mornings but in the afternoon
and the whole incentive and

reason for extending that is to

try to push more people into

the parking garage get them
parked in that central location

and use utilizing the star
circulator. [Melissa] The when you

mention nights of lights I also
wanted to point out there may

be either a change or a
suspension with the maybe not

suspension but a change in the
hours for the star circulator

as well. I think right now it
goes until ten I do think we've

talked about those hours may be
cut back just because that

circular time may be
constrained so. [Rueben] Yeah it gets

adjusted and so we're we're
learning you know so we're

going to make adjustments as
necessary. Uh this will be the

first season that we go through
Nights of Lights with the Star

Circulator. So yeah there there
may be adjustments that have to

be made but at the end of the
day you know we we really want

people to get parked in the
garage and and utilize have

free service from here until we
start adding on additional

services into the future. Um
the other thing when we when

you and I were talking about
this and I've been speaking to

staff about it. There also will
be a change I think the morning

times. Is that correct? It's
going to be the same. [Rueben] Well no

the morning times around the
plaza enforcement doesn't

start. Pay parking doesn't
start till 10 AM around the

plaza. [Melissa] Okay. [Rueben] Um so we're
going to keep that in place. Um

but what our city commission
approved was to extend the

times into the evening. Okay.
But outside of the plaza area

will will be pay park will
start at 8 AM. [Melissa] Okay. Um and of

course any changes that happen
you'll see that it is coming

out on November 6th. Um the
other thing about the parking

that's interesting is by doing
all of this it really helps to

give us that push to being you

know working with the

transportation hub over at
Broudy. That will be another

benefit of this parking idea
and parking garage is if that

other garage goes in we're
going to have that additional

place to park. [Rueben] Right. Yeah.
We'll be adding 750 more

parking spaces to our
inventory. You know right now

we are we're around 1500
parking spaces for the total

city for public parking. So
it's almost we're increasing

our inventory by half. Now the
change that has to occur is

people have to embrace shuttles
and a different way of

accessing the city of Saint
Augustine. Um the other thing

the Broudy Garage does is it
really opens up that West

Augustine business district as
well. Um we have intentions if

we move forward to relaxing
parking requirements in that

area so they can benefit from
that public garage being there

and we get usage of the garage
as well so I'm really excited

about what it can mean to the
west city area. Yeah. Um as

well as a different way for
accessing the downtown area.

We've always envisioned it
maybe being more of the local

workforce hub location where
you you park there. It's

accessible off of homes

Boulevard, State Road sixteen,

US1. [Melissa] You don't have to come
downtown. [Rueben] And it will change

the way that you access the
downtown area. [Melissa] Yeah, commuting.

[Rueben] And commuting, yeah. [Melissa] Well,
there's a lot of changes going

on. I will also remind folks to
check out information. Uh we do

have residential parking. There
are monthly discounts for

parking permits at the parking
garage. So, there's a lot of

mobility programs, solutions
out there that I think a lot of

folks aren't necessarily always
aware of. [Rueben] Yeah, that's so the

parking garage it's \$30, \$33

anything with tax and you can

get a monthly parking pass so
that that's a great opportunity

if you're working downtown now
where that gets difficult is in

our peak times people you know
that garage fills up so it's

not as easily accessible so
that's kind of where the Broudy

Garage comes in is we'll have
the same type of monthly

parking program there that
hopefully will be accessible

during our real peak times
right for residents because to

prevent spill over from people
just parking in our residential

areas we have a residential
permit parking program So any

resident can if they feel like
they have a lot of commuter

traffic and parking they can
reach out to the our parking

division and we'll do a study
to see if it qualifies for

residential permit parking and
that's a great way especially

in our historic neighborhoods
of preventing that spill over

from the historic downtown
area. [Melissa] Well, Rueben, lots of

exciting stuff coming for
parking and mobility. Um we're

always thinking forward. So,
thank you for coming and

talking to us about it and
everybody else can listen and

wait for that official
announcement for November the

sixth just be aware that
changes are coming [Rueben] yes thank

you very much [Melissa] if you missed
part of this broadcast and

want to go back and listen from
the beginning you can now find

us on your favorite podcasting
app look for us on Spotify

iHeartRadio and more you'll
find all that listing in our

past episodes and this one at
City Saint Aug Radio. com be

sure to follow us on our social
media platforms you'll find us

on Facebook Twitter and
Instagram at City Saint Aug.

Thanks again for tuning in.
Until next time. [Narrator] You've been

listening to The Breakroom, a

weekly program addressing

projects and programs offered
by the City of St. Augustine.

Join us each week as the city's
communications director Melissa

Wissel has in-depth
conversations with the people

who make our town work to meet
the needs of our community. The

Breakroom is produced by
communication specialist for

the City of St. Augustine,
Cindy Walker. See you at this

time next week for another
edition of The Breakroom.