

DATE: October 15, 2019

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Tiffany Chew, Business Development Specialist
Wayne Chen, Assistant Community
Development Director
Aarti Shrivastava, Assistant City Manager/
Community Development Director

VIA: Daniel H. Rich, City Manager

TITLE: **Downtown Parking Strategy**



PURPOSE

The purpose of the Study Session is to receive Council input on a potential downtown parking strategy.

BACKGROUND

Downtown Mountain View is a thriving commercial district with access to a variety of amenities, transportation/infrastructure (e.g., Transit Center), and cultural resources (e.g., Civic Center). New office developments in recent years, employment densification (e.g., more employees located in an office building), and a shift from retail to more restaurant/experiential uses are key reasons why downtown has become a regional attraction with increasing demand. This success, however, has also increased demand for downtown parking.

Over the years, the City has taken various steps to facilitate the growing popularity of downtown and demand for more public parking through individual and separate shorter- and longer-term strategies. In fall 2016, the City Council discussed short- and long-term options to increase parking supply. Council supported a valet parking pilot program, providing rideshare credits through Lyft and Uber, and the study of paid parking but did not support the exploration of a third public parking structure. Staff attempted to partner with the rideshare companies, but a program was not viable at the time. However, staff has implemented a valet parking pilot program at Parking Lot 11 and completed the Downtown Paid Parking Study.

Most recently, the Council provided input on a downtown paid parking strategy during the March 19, 2019 Study Session (Attachment 1). Overall, the City Council supported

the use of technology to help inform downtown parking strategies (such as using technology for data-driven programs/policies, wayfinding, etc.), and generally supported the specific strategy of paid parking but articulated the need for more information about how and when paid parking would be strategically implemented/deployed. However, the Council also provided input on broader downtown parking goals and issues, including the following input:

- Explore residential parking permit program options to address spillover into the neighborhood, specifically downtown neighborhoods (including Willowgate).
- Review the Downtown Parking Permit Program and number of permits sold.
- Explore a transportation management association study, including program options, funding, and governance.
- Explore options to use future development projects to generate replacement parking.
- Explore opportunities to increase parking efficiency.
- Explore more wayfinding and parking technology options.
- Develop parking policies and programs to support downtown businesses.

Based on Council's input on various elements and goals, the City retained Dixon Resources Unlimited (Dixon) to work with staff on developing a downtown parking strategy. The purpose of this strategy is to evaluate options for a comprehensive, integrated approach to addressing downtown parking demand. An integrated parking management strategy where multiple programs are working intentionally together can significantly improve the utilization and availability of existing parking supply. A key component of such a strategy is to facilitate an effective distribution of parking demand, as well as frequent parking turnover, to optimize its use of existing parking capacities. Without strategic management, parking demand tends to cluster around certain locations, resulting in constrained availability in a concentrated area—even though there is available parking nearby—and the perception there is not enough parking. Also, the Downtown Committee, as part of their Fiscal Year 2019-20 Work Plan, will continue to focus on implementation of downtown parking programs.

The City Council has discussed downtown parking within the broader context of the Downtown Precise Plan (Precise Plan) and downtown development projects. The City Council has discussed the Precise Plan over several meetings. Based upon Council

input on the Precise Plan, staff will focus on potential revisions to subareas A, G, and H in the downtown regarding design guidelines, feasibility of a historic district overlay, and minimal ground-floor land use changes. In September 2019, the City Council discussed Parking Lot 12 and potential developers. Council confirmed its direction to replace the 160 parking spaces but was open to where and how those 160 spaces were replaced.

In addition, the City hosted an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel that provided an assessment of opportunities and areas of consideration for downtown Mountain View (Attachment 2). The panel recommended downtown Mountain View should continue to build upon its character and brand, but be proactive in preserving older, smaller buildings and encourage new development to accommodate a range of ground-floor retail uses. Also, managing parking for efficiency and user convenience will support these efforts. Parking recommendations are integrated into this parking strategy.

Downtown Mountain View Vision

Downtown Mountain View has a diverse mix of uses surrounded by residential neighborhoods. Guided by the Precise Plan, the vision of downtown is defined as “the historic center and civic focus of the community and the ‘heartbeat’ of the City. The downtown is characterized by a concentration of activities, including civic functions and cultural events, as well as a vital residential and commercial district, all of which provide a strong focal point for the City.”

To implement the vision, the Precise Plan seeks to achieve a pedestrian-oriented environment, maintain the character of downtown, encourage development in specific locations, facilitate ground-floor uses along Castro Street, locate office development in specific areas, and incorporate transition areas into the residential neighborhoods. These land-use policies are linked to parking requirements because growth can change parking habits and demand. For example, transitioning a retail space to a restaurant requires more parking because a restaurant requires more staff. For this reason, the Precise Plan also identifies the following parking objectives to address parking demands in a manner that achieves the urban, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented vision of downtown.

- Facilitate development of a convenient and accessible downtown by ensuring adequate parking is provided.
- Provide incentives and shared parking facilities to support Castro Street between Mercy Street and Evelyn Avenue.

- Encourage the use of transit, bicycles, shuttles, and other alternative modes to reduce demand for downtown parking facilities.
- Encourage public/private partnerships aimed at increasing parking supply.
- Provide adequate and well-located parking within the Downtown Precise Plan to allow for future growth.
- Monitor parking supply and demand.

Downtown Parking Assessment District

To support these parking objectives, the City administers the Downtown Parking Assessment District (Parking District). The Parking District supports the following programs: the Downtown Parking Permit Program, parking technology at the two parking structures, and the Valet Parking Pilot Program. The Parking Permit Program allows property owners and business owners within the Parking District to purchase parking permits allowing them to park all day in specific parking facilities. The program is predominantly used by technology companies, which purchase permits for their employees. Meanwhile, the parking technology tracks real-time parking occupancy at both parking structures and tells the public whether the facility is full or the number of available parking spaces. The Valet Parking Pilot Program at Parking Lot 11 increases the lot's capacity by approximately 30 percent, Thursday through Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., by allowing a valet service to stack cars beyond the designed parking spaces. To support the surrounding neighborhoods, Public Works manages the Residential Parking Pilot Program which is a Citywide program and can be applied to any neighborhood.

Additionally, the Parking District manages and operates 11 public parking facilities—2 parking structures and 9 surface parking lots (see Map 1). All of the parking spaces have timed parking restrictions Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Parking District generates revenues through permit sales for the downtown parking program (for office employees) and property owner assessments within the Parking District. Parking District funds are to be used for operations, maintenance, and replacement of existing parking. The General Fund does not contribute to the Parking District.

The Parking District also collects a Parking In-Lieu Fee. Developers/businesses within the Parking District (see Map 1 for the boundaries) are required to add parking spaces or pay a fee (currently \$52,000 per parking stall) in lieu of providing parking on-site. Many of the individual properties within this area are small and/or oddly shaped, so to have them provide their own parking on-site could be highly inefficient or render the businesses infeasible. As such, the purpose of the in-lieu fee is to pool funding from development to create larger/more efficient parking facilities to support properties in the historic Castro Street commercial area. This allows the City to work with private property owners in creating a cohesive public parking system instead of smaller private parking lots/structures scattered throughout downtown. The Parking In-Lieu Fee revenue can only be used for the creation of new public parking spaces. Current in-lieu funds are fully allocated to build 75 net-new public parking spaces at the Hope Street Development Project (Parking Lots 4 and 8).

Map 1: Downtown Mountain View Parking Map



DISCUSSION

As mentioned, downtown parking demand is currently driven by various factors. To address these demands and Council input from the March 2019 paid parking Study Session, staff has evaluated and identified potential components of a comprehensive downtown parking strategy. The evaluation process has involved review of the City's downtown parking data (collected twice a year), analysis in collaboration with Dixon, and a review of best practices. Initial components of a strategy include significantly increasing the efficient use of existing spaces and longer-term strategies to facilitate mode shift. This focus also has the advantage of being cost-effective and supportive of

the City’s sustainability goals. Staff seeks Council input on the question of adding net-new public parking supply.

Current Downtown Conditions

The most recent downtown parking occupancy data collection took place in April 2019 on a Wednesday through Saturday every two hours from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Note that the parking industry standard for desired capacity is 85 percent, meaning that at any given time, no more than 85 percent of the public parking spaces are occupied. At this percentage, there are enough vacant parking spaces to minimize congestion from drivers searching for spaces without creating an oversupply of parking. Table 1 shows the average occupancy by time of day in the City’s 11 public parking facilities. Although there continues to be weekday peak-demand periods during the lunch and dinner hours, for the vast majority of the time, there is excess parking supply system-wide. The highest parking demand occurred at 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday and Friday, as well as 12:00 noon during all weekdays. The demand for parking on Saturday peaked at 79 percent at 8:00 p.m. Based on the data, there are only brief periods where parking demand exceeds the 85 percent threshold.

Table 1: Off-Street Average Parking Occupancy by Time – April 2019 Count

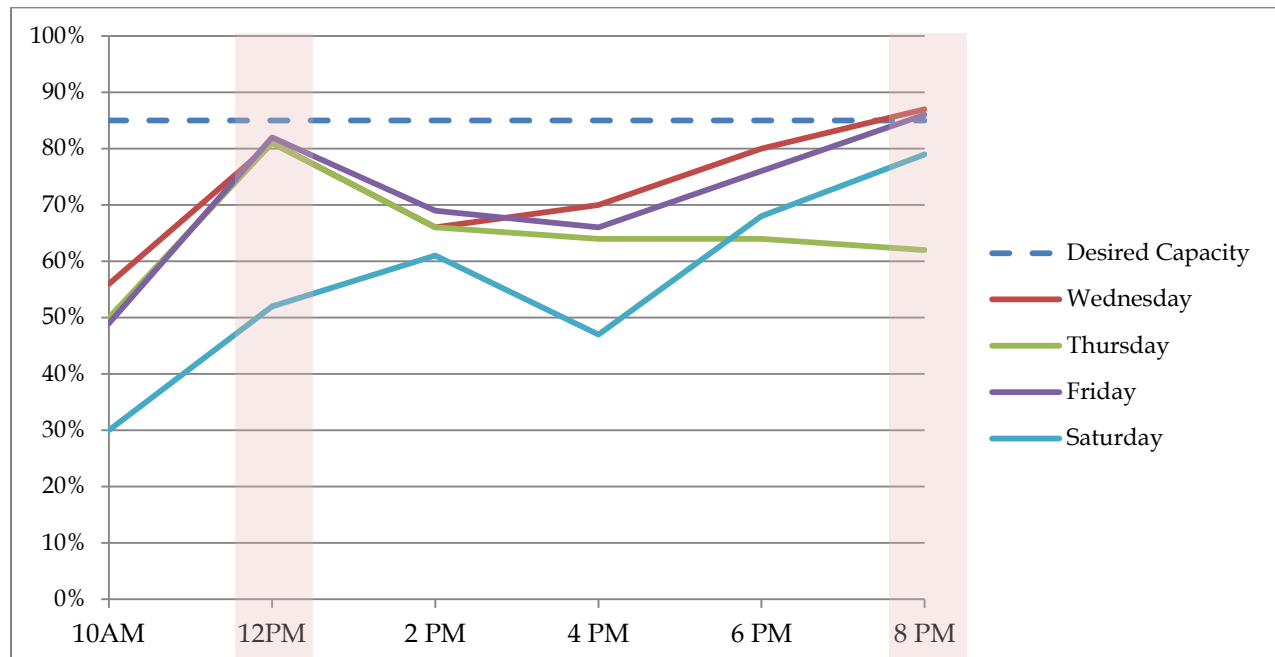


Table 2 shows the data from the perspective of the average parking utilization rate across each parking facility for each day. Parking Structure 3 continues to be the most underutilized public parking facility with available parking at all times during the

parking counts. The most recent parking count indicates that Wednesday had the most demand for public parking with over half of the parking facilities at or over capacity, but on the other days (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday), a majority of the facilities have some capacity. Previous parking occupancy counts indicated Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday had over half of the parking facilities at or over capacity. The change could be due to Facebook moving out of downtown Mountain View. The Wednesday demand could be due to businesses hosting private events. If adding net-new public parking supply (particularly stand-alone facilities specifically for public parking) is used to address the brief times of peak demand, then the City could be creating significant excess capacity for the nonpeak hours. Excess capacity could also have the unintended consequence of encouraging automobile travel and disincentivizing shifts to alternative modes of transportation.

Table 2: Average Daily Parking Utilization Rates per Downtown Parking Facility

Parking Facility Location	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Parking Structure 1	100%	100%	89%	54%
Lot 2	70%	69%	80%	95%
Parking Structure 3	43%	41%	48%	19%
Lot 4	94%	45%	84%	97%
Lot 5	81%	68%	80%	88%
Lot 6	95%	88%	96%	82%
Lot 7	87%	89%	81%	61%
Lot 8	93%	54%	72%	71%
Lot 9	89%	64%	83%	73%
Lot 11	68%	46%	59%	63%
Lot 12	50%	46%	48%	50%

(The green cells identify the parking facilities that are at or below 85 percent; the blue cells identify facilities between 86 percent and 90 percent; and the red cells identify facilities over 90 percent.)

Staff’s analysis suggests that downtown parking demand is significantly impacted by the downtown parking program permit holders. Weekday parking demands that exceed the 85 percent desired capacity are concentrated in parking facilities that allow permit parking—Parking Structure 1 and Parking Lots 6 and 7. Meanwhile, Saturday parking demand shifts to locations closest to the historic core—Parking Lot 2, 4, and 5. Therefore, staff believes that modification of the Downtown Parking Permit Program needs to be a key component of the parking strategy, as discussed further below.

Downtown Parking Strategy

Based upon the input from City Council and current downtown conditions, staff developed parking goals to address parking efficiency and parking demand and supply. With these goals, staff developed initial concepts of a strategy organized into four sections: modification of existing programs to increase efficiency, implementation of parking technology, transportation demand management programs, and increasing parking supply. As mentioned, significantly increasing parking efficiency is a key strategy, as simply adding new parking supply to meet peak parking demand would likely be a significantly high cost and/or cause the downtown to be overparked most of the time.

- **Modification of existing programs to increase parking efficiency.** The City has implemented parking programs since the creation of the Parking District to manage parking demand and supply. Steps can be taken to improve efficient use of existing parking spaces through modification of existing programs and policies. Specifically, staff believes that modifying the Downtown Parking Permit Program, the Residential Parking Permit Program, on- and off-street timed parking limits, and potential enhanced enforcement/compliance resources can greatly increase parking efficiency and meet much, if not most, of the downtown parking demand, at least for the next several years and as the first set of actions to take.
- **Implementation of parking technology.** Parking technology can also greatly facilitate parking efficiency. In consultation with Dixon, the following are key parking technologies that the Council could consider: (1) wayfinding programs and/or infrastructure, such as downloadable apps that show where and how much parking there is as well as more effective physical signage installed in downtown; (2) installation of parking management software that facilitates data-gathering for data-driven policy making; and (3) paid parking. These three options are in order of short-, medium-, and longer-term horizons.
- **Programs to support transportation demand management (TDM).** The City can consider broader programs to shift parking demand through TDM measures that shift travel from auto-oriented to alternative modes of transportation. During the paid parking Study Session, Council identified development of a transportation management association (TMA) to serve downtown (whether as part of the Citywide TMA or a separate one for downtown specifically) as an item to evaluate. This evaluation has begun and will be incorporated as part of the strategy. Staff will also explore other potential TDM measures, such as shared parking, modification of the Parking District, and/or in-lieu fee amount. Staff also seeks Council input on any other TDM measures it would like staff to evaluate.

- **Policies to increase parking supply.** Policies to increase parking supply could be considered to ensure parking demand is at the 85 percent desired capacity. Parking supply supports the downtown businesses by providing available parking for their customers and employees. The Parking District supports existing supply, but there are several proposed office development projects that are within the Parking District and may have limited private parking spaces due to property constraints. The City could consider options to change/expand the Parking District; explore a third parking structure; and update the parking in-lieu fee so it can support the full cost of building of new parking spaces.

Question No. 1: Does the City Council support the four goals for the downtown parking strategy?

Each section is intended to include direct, actionable items/programs that can occur through three phases: immediate and ongoing items, Phase 1 (1 to 2 years), and Phase 2 (2 to 5 years).

1. Programs to increase parking efficiency.

Program	Time Frame
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize utilization of the current valet parking pilot program at Parking Lot 11. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue shared parking agreements with private landowners. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing biannual collection of occupancy data to monitor parking demand. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current Residential Parking Permit Program. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide parking occupancy information to the public through multiple forms, including the City website and apps. 	Phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current Downtown Parking Permit Program, including increasing the permit fee and reducing the number of permits issued. 	Phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current parking enforcement efforts. 	Phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimize loading zone and curb space to support a variety of uses. 	Phase 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an ongoing parking facility maintenance and upkeep plan. 	Phase 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review on- and off-street time limits to create more parking options. 	Phase 2

2. Implementation of parking technology.

Program	Time Frame
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure accuracy of current parking technology. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue parking management software to manage the Downtown Parking Permit Program. 	Phase 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue the expansion of parking technology into public parking lots. 	Phase 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the use of parking technology for enforcement. 	Phase 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin the process of establishing a paid parking system by identifying parking technology needs. 	Phase 2

3. Programs to support TDM.

Program	Time Frame
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore a transportation management association study, including program options, funding, and governance. 	Phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all new downtown development projects to enter into a shared parking agreement. 	Phase 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop options for employee subsidies and incentives to encourage public transportation. 	Phase 2

4. Policies to increase parking supply.

Program	Time Frame
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue shared parking agreements with property owners (staff is currently working with Kaiser Permanente). 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current Downtown Parking District and update the Parking In-Lieu Fee. 	Phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options to increase parking supply through a third public parking structure. 	Phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Parking District with in-lieu fees instead of allowing private parking. 	Phase 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support partnerships with private property owners to build public parking within the Parking District. 	Phase 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options to extend the Parking District and requiring public and/or shared parking with new projects. 	Phase 2

Question No 2. Does the City Council agree with the programs and phasing of the proposed strategy?

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council provide feedback and direction on the following questions posed in the Study Session memo:

Question No. 1: Does the City Council support the four goals for the downtown parking strategy?

Question No. 2: Does the City Council agree with the programs and phasing of the proposed strategy?

NEXT STEPS

Following feedback at this Study Session, staff will continue to work on ongoing projects and present the draft strategy to the Downtown Committee, Central Business Association, and Chamber of Commerce for review and input. Staff will finalize a comprehensive, integrated downtown parking strategy and timeline for Council consideration by the end of Q1 2020 along with resource, timing, and funding estimates. Also, make a note that many of these are not currently included with the current Council goals and are proposed to be part of a later phase.

PUBLIC NOTICING

The meeting agenda and Study Session memo were posted on the City's website and announced on cable television Channel 26. All property owners within the Downtown Parking District and all property owners and businesses within a 750' radius of the Downtown Precise Plan area were sent notice, as well as the Downtown Committee, Central Business Association, Mountain View Chamber of Commerce, the Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association, Moffett Boulevard Neighborhood Group, and Shoreline West Association of Neighbors.

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Attachments: 1. March 19, 2019 Downtown Paid Parking Study Session
2. Urban Land Institute – Technical Assistance Panel: Downtown Mountain View