

**DATE:** May 11, 2021

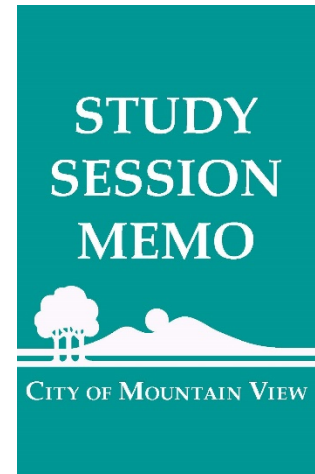
**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Tiffany Chew, Business Development Specialist  
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Community Development Director

**VIA:** Kimbra McCarthy, City Manager

**TITLE:** **Downtown Parking Strategy**

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## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Study Session is for the City Council to provide direction to staff on the Downtown Parking Strategy framework and options to address current and future parking demand in the downtown area.

**This Study Session is limited to discussion of whether the Downtown Parking Strategy should include parking supply solutions generally. Specific options to increase parking supply, such as whether to construct a new parking structure or specific locations for a potential new parking structure, will not be discussed at this Study Session and will be scheduled for a future meeting.**

## **BACKGROUND**

Downtown Mountain View is a thriving commercial district with access to diverse restaurants, public transportation infrastructure, and civic and cultural resources. This vibrancy has been associated with an increase in parking demand, which may be directly caused by a number of land use factors, such as new office developments in recent years, employment densification, and a shift from retail to more restaurant uses. While parking challenges are frustrating and important to address, high parking demand is one indication of an active, thriving, and popular downtown.

Over the years, the City has taken various steps to facilitate the growing popularity of downtown and manage the demand for public parking through individual and separate short- and long-term solutions. These include a downtown parking permit program, a valet parking pilot program at Parking Lot 11, and installation of real-time parking occupancy signs at the two public parking structures. The Downtown Parking Maintenance and Operations Assessment District (Parking District) provides the funding for these programs as well as ongoing maintenance and operations of the 11 public

parking facilities (two parking garages and nine parking lots) in the Parking District (see Figure 1 for an overview of public parking).



Figure 1: Overview of Public Parking within the Downtown Parking District

## **Recent and Ongoing Studies and Projects Related to Downtown Parking**

In 2018, Council added the Downtown Paid Parking study to their Fiscal Year 2018-19 Work Plan to address and manage peak parking demand in downtown. The study, which was conducted with the help of Dixon Resources, a parking management consultant, analyzed parking demand and recommended an Action Plan to manage parking, including implementation of a paid parking solution. The City Council reviewed the study and recommendations at a Study Session on March 19, 2019 and generally supported the development of parking policies and programs to support downtown businesses and increase parking efficiency. However, while Council generally supported the concept of paid parking as a solution, the Council wanted to take a more measured approach and study the implementation of parking technology as a first phase toward a strategic implementation of the program.

Meanwhile, there are several projects, either approved or under review, that will have implications regarding the parking supply in downtown.

### 1. Downtown Action Plan Implementation Items:

- a. Valet Parking Pilot Program: The program operates at Parking Lot 11 Thursday through Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. by allowing a valet company (hired by the City) to stack cars beyond the designated parking spaces. The program is currently paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- b. Residential Parking Permit (RPP) Program: The Action Plan recommended an RPP Program for the residential streets in the downtown study area as a way to manage parking spillover from other uses. This is an implementation item in the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Council Work Plan and is being managed by the Public Works Department. Staff is developing revised RPP Program guidelines which will be brought to Council in June 2021.

2. Downtown Precise Plan Update: Staff is currently working on the Phase 1 revisions of the Downtown Precise Plan (Precise Plan) to Areas A, G, and H, which will return to Council in June 2021 for a Study Session discussion regarding design guidelines, feasibility of a historic district overlay, and minor ground-floor land use changes. The Phase 2 updates of the Precise Plan will take a more holistic approach to reviewing land uses in the entire Precise Plan boundaries but will follow after the adoption of the Downtown Parking Strategy.

3. Parking Lot 12: Lot 12 is owned by the City and has 160 parking spaces available to the public for uses in downtown (although it is not in the Parking District). The City is partnering with Alta Housing, an affordable housing developer, to develop affordable housing units on the site. The developer is proposing not to replace the existing spaces but will provide \$10 million to the City which may be used to support the City's parking goals. The City is working with the developer on a Disposition and Development Agreement (DDA) and an authorization to submit a formal planning application, which is anticipated to be brought to Council in fall 2021.
4. Development Projects in the Parking District:
  - a. Lots 4 and 8: The City Council approved a hotel on Parking Lot 4 and an office building on Parking Lot 8. The projects would replace all the public parking plus an additional 75 net new public parking stalls and would allow off-peak public access to the private office parking as well.
  - b. 701 West Evelyn Avenue: The City Council approved a development project at 701 West Evelyn Avenue (four stories, 28,090 square feet of office space, and 6,841 square feet of ground-floor commercial space) with a requirement for an on-site parking garage consisting of a mix of 81 public and private underground spaces accessed through the neighboring hotel garage at Lot 4. At the public hearing, the developer expressed interest in working with the City on an alternative parking approach.
  - c. 705 West Dana Street: This project proposes a 31,250 square foot, four-story office building with 3,700 square feet of ground-floor retail. The applicant is requesting to build 46 on-site parking spaces and provide an in-lieu payment of 37 parking spaces. The project is currently under review.
  - d. 756 California Street: The project proposes a 7,110 square foot, three-story office building with 2,140 square feet of ground-floor retail, and 2,340 square feet of ground-floor medical office. The applicant is requesting to provide an in-lieu payment for the 22 spaces required. The project is currently under review.
  - e. 747 Dana Street: The project proposes a 7,942 square foot, three-story office building with 1,155 square feet of ground-floor retail. The applicant is requesting to provide an in-lieu payment for the 20 spaces required. The project is currently under review.

5. Transit Center Master Plan: The Transit Center Master Plan, adopted by the City Council in May 2017, provides information regarding redevelopment opportunities of the existing Transit Center as it relates to growth and parking supply. According to the Transit Center Master Plan, there is a demand for approximately 200 parking spaces for current transit users beyond the parking capacity provided in the Caltrain parking lot. The Master Plan calls for any development of the Caltrain parking lot to replace all existing parking on-site and add up to 200 more spaces for transit users to reduce overflow onto the City's streets. Increased shuttle services and bicycle facilities are also planned to help reduce parking demand for transit users. A joint City/Caltrain planning effort is needed to better identify land use and transportation operations, evaluate financial feasibility, and formally adopt a preferred plan for the development of Caltrain's property. This planning effort will be started once both the City and Caltrain are ready in terms of priorities and staffing capacity.
  
6. Castro Street Grade Separation and Transit Center Access Improvements: This project, currently in design, includes reconfigurations at Castro Street and Central Expressway and improves pedestrian and bicycle crossings with the planned closure of Castro Street at the Caltrain railroad tracks. The project will require the removal of eight parking spaces on Evelyn Avenue at Castro Street and an additional 48 marked parking spaces on Evelyn Avenue near Shoreline Boulevard behind the Police/Fire Administration Building. Under a cooperative agreement between the City, Caltrain, and Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), Caltrain is developing the final design with funding from VTA's Measure B sales tax. Construction may begin in two to three years once final design is complete and VTA provides the construction funding.

While these projects are being reviewed individually, they collectively have impacts on parking in downtown. Staff, therefore, recommended a coordinated Downtown Parking Strategy to review all these projects in terms of their implications on the parking demand and supply in downtown and to create a comprehensive and coordinated strategy that would serve as a guiding document to manage current and future parking demand and provide direction for these projects and future projects. The Downtown Parking Strategy was also included in the work plan under Council's Major Goals for Fiscal Years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

### **Downtown Parking Strategy**

Issues and challenges with downtown parking are multi-faceted and have complex interactions with land use policy, infrastructure needs, community values, and downtown economic activity. It is necessary to take a holistic, top-down approach to the

issue, and the Downtown Parking Strategy is a comprehensive effort to develop a coordinated approach related to parking for a range of City activities, including:

- Downtown Precise Plan;
- Land development project review;
- Transportation and mobility infrastructure plans;
- Future needs for the Downtown Parking District;
- Parking management, operations, administration, and enforcement;
- Sustainability initiatives, including encouraging the use of transit, walking, and biking; and
- Residential parking permit program, and others.

In August 2020, the City hired Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc., a transportation planning firm with experience in developing comprehensive parking strategies, to develop the Downtown Parking Strategy. The Downtown Parking Strategy is based upon four primary goals (Figure 2) identified at a previous City Council Study Session on the Downtown Parking Strategy (Attachment 1 – [October 15, 2019 Downtown Parking Strategy Study Session Memo](#)).



Figure 2: Downtown Parking Strategy Primary Goals

### Study Area

The study area for the Downtown Parking Strategy includes the greater downtown area bounded by Shoreline Boulevard, Central Expressway, Calderon Avenue, and El Camino

Real (Figure 3—Study Area Map). The study seeks to address parking challenges in the busiest part of downtown along Castro Street and within the Downtown Precise Plan and Parking District. However, the study also recognizes that parking dynamics are not confined to lines on a map—addressing downtown’s parking challenges requires a full-picture approach that includes the entire study area.



Figure 3: Study Area

## **DISCUSSION**

During the initial phase of the Downtown Parking Strategy scope, the consultant has been reviewing past plans, analyzing historical data, and collecting new data related to parking in downtown Mountain View. The result of those efforts has been documented in a series of existing-conditions fact sheets which will serve as a basis for finalizing the Downtown Parking Strategy during the next phase of the project (Attachment 2). The fact sheets include the following:

1. Fact Sheet No. 1: A comprehensive review of existing parking spaces (inventory) in downtown, including information on regulations, ownership, and distribution.
2. Fact Sheet No. 2: An examination of how parking is used in downtown, including an analysis of historic data and data collected in November 2020.
3. Fact Sheet No. 3: An overview of how parking is managed in downtown, including the Parking District, parking enforcement practices, the parking in-lieu fee program, and parking permit programs.
4. Fact Sheet No. 4: An analysis of existing and projected future parking demand, including expected growth in downtown and parking impacts.
5. Fact Sheet No. 5: A review of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected parking and transportation in downtown Mountain View and across the country, including industry research about the near-term and potential long-term impacts on parking.

### **Existing Parking**

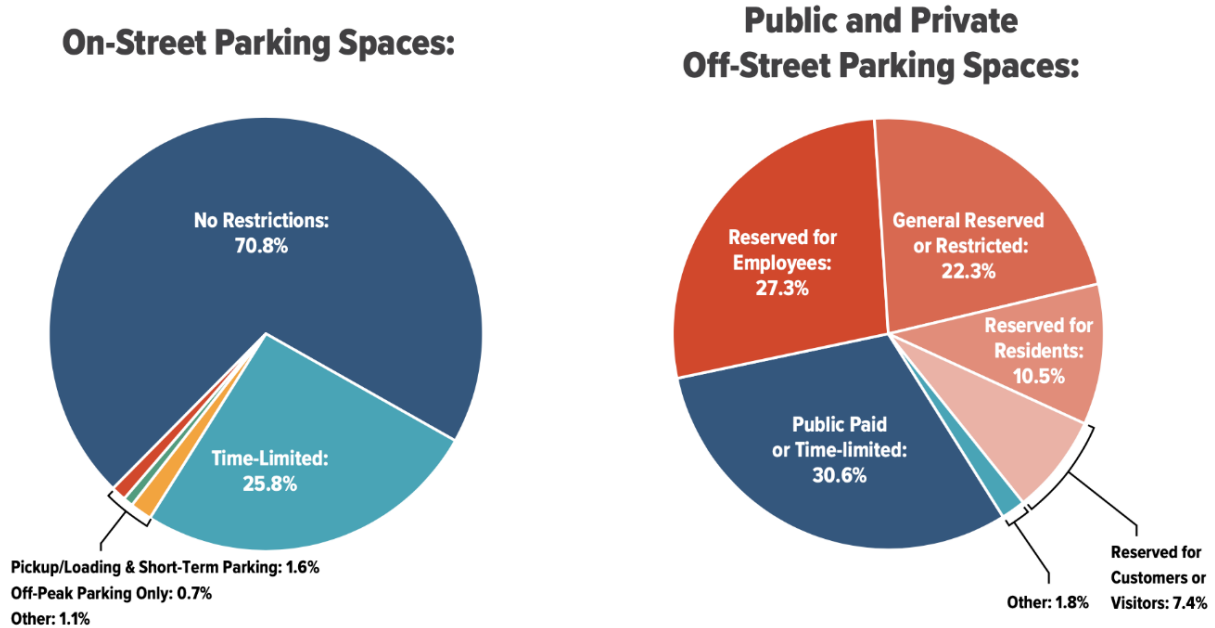
In the downtown Mountain View study area, there are (see Figure 4):

- 1,584 publicly available off-street parking spaces in City-owned numbered lots and garages;
- 3,328 public on-street parking spaces; and
- 5,887 other off-street parking spaces, of which 700 spaces are publicly available, such as the City Hall and Caltrain lots. This count does not include private garages in the single-family residential areas.



Public off-street parking, which is the focus of much of the City’s analysis, investment, and policy, is only about 15% of all the parking in the study area. The other 85% of spaces have varying levels of access restrictions and limitations. Many of the public on-street spaces in the study area are in residential neighborhoods. While some of these neighborhoods face concerns about spillover impacts from other downtown uses, many are located too far from the core of downtown to be useful for meeting parking needs where demand is highest.

The vast majority of privately-owned off-street spaces in downtown are inaccessible to the general public. Often built as a result of conservative parking requirements, these private garages include almost 60% of the study area’s supply, but many are not being used to their full potential. See Fact Sheet No. 2, “Parking Inventory,” for more information.



**Figure 4: Percentage of Available On and Off Street Parking**

### PUBLICLY-OWNED PARKING LOTS AND GARAGES

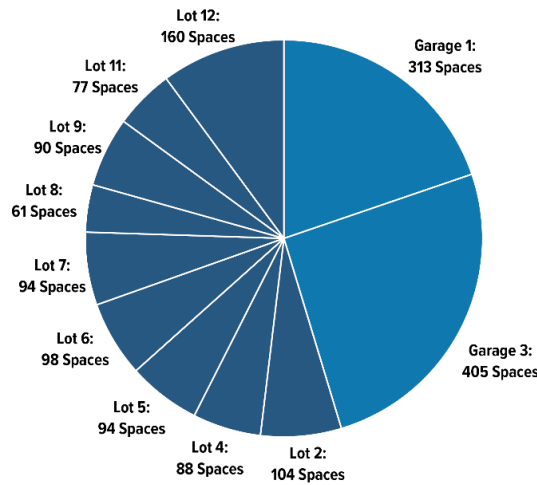


Figure 5: Breakdown of Publicly Owned Parking Facilities

### Existing Parking Utilization

The ideal parking utilization target is around 85% to 90% in each block, lot, and garage. When utilization is higher than that, finding a parking space is difficult, and drivers tend to circle for an available spot. Weekday peak parking demand in the downtown core is at 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m., with parking utilization across the core between 70% and 90% prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, demand and utilization are not evenly distributed. Public off-street facilities are above 90% occupancy in most lots – only Lots 8, 11, 12, and Garage 3 are typically below that threshold (Figure 6).

When parking utilization is unevenly distributed, it often signals that there are issues with parking management or regulations. For example, it may be too easy for all-day parkers to use up spaces in high-demand areas, leaving few spaces available for high-turnover visitors, such as shopping or restaurant customers. Uneven utilization may also signal that there is inadequate wayfinding for people to quickly and efficiently find available spaces.

The relationship between parking supply, demand, and utilization is complex—just because parking is overutilized or underutilized in some places does not necessarily mean that there is a supply shortage or surplus. Demand is dynamic, and changes depend on how parking is used, managed, and priced. For example, there may be latent demand for convenient, short-term parking in spaces which are currently used by people parking all day long.

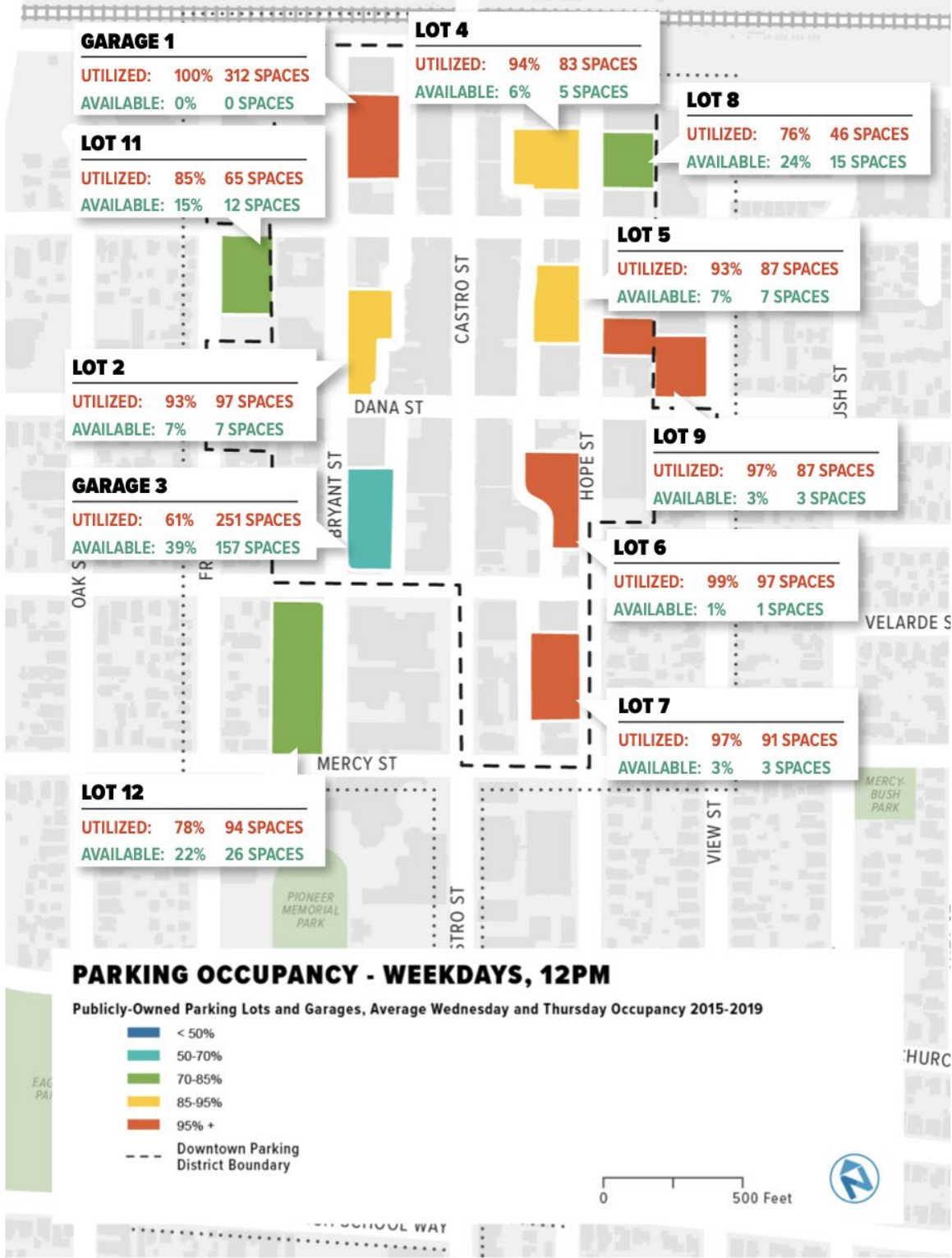


Figure 6: Public Parking Utilization – Weekday at 12:00 Noon

## Parking Issues

The findings of issues and challenges are listed below. The Downtown Parking Strategy will be crafted to address these issues.

1. Inefficient use of convenient spaces: Without targeted time and cost restrictions, the most convenient spaces will be consistently over-occupied with little turnover.
2. Single-use private parking: The City Code and City policies do not sufficiently incentivize shared parking, and significant resources are expended in creating private garages that do not efficiently serve the broad range of uses in downtown. As a result, downtown visitors are unable to access much of the existing supply in downtown.
3. Ineffective permit program: The design of the downtown permit program, which is intended to help manage access and turnover in public lots and garages, is not resulting in the desired use of those public facilities. The low price and high availability of permits for office employees do not sufficiently incentivize use of alternative modes and do not sufficiently reflect the true cost of driving and parking in downtown. In addition, employees of ground-floor uses (such as restaurants) are unable to find permit-only spaces since they often arrive later in the day, so they are forced to relocate their vehicles or park in the residential neighborhood.
4. Lack of wayfinding and parking information: Customers arriving during peak times often circle a few lots in the downtown core before finding a space, causing congestion and frustration.
5. Limited on-street parking management: Some downtown residents express concerns about spillover impacts from nearby businesses and Caltrain riders. Existing on-street management tools do not seem to be sufficient for addressing these challenges. Growth in Caltrain ridership and employees may affect street parking in some neighborhoods, where some residents may have grown to rely on it, and it may also add traffic to residential neighborhoods. Meanwhile, some buildings do not have access to adequate private parking and are dependent on street parking, while other buildings do not sufficiently encourage occupants to use available private parking when street parking is more visible and convenient.
6. Parking in-lieu fee limitations: The Precise Plan does not clearly convey how parking in-lieu fees should be administered when development is expected to exacerbate an existing public parking deficit. In addition, while the purpose of the fee is for expansion of the parking supply, there will come a point when no

additional public parking is proposed to be built, in which case there would be no use for the collected fee. Lastly, the value of the in-lieu fee may be lower than the actual cost to construct parking. Applicability of the in-lieu fee also depends on minimum parking requirements in the City Code, which are outdated and are not well-calibrated for a mixed-use downtown.

7. Required parking poorly reflects City objectives: Too little parking will constrain vitality, impact residents, and frustrate visitors. Too much parking, however, can incentivize more driving, create congestion, and undermine goals of affordability and sustainability. Minimum parking requirements are high in both the City Code and the Downtown Precise Plan and do not reflect the efficiency opportunities downtown has as a walkable mixed-use district. Parking requirements also do not adequately reflect the potential for Transportation Demand Management (TDM), which has not been implemented in downtown to the extent it has in other areas.

### **COVID-19 Impacts**

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every aspect of life in Mountain View, including parking. To better understand how parking demand has changed, the consultant reviewed historical parking demand and the most recent parking data collected in October 2020. Looking at parking activity during COVID-19 will enable the City to: (1) fully capture the pandemic's impacts; (2) plan for a return to a new normal; and (3) monitor and compare data to facilitate phased implementation of recommendations. An analysis of COVID-19's effect on downtown parking is provided in the attached Fact Sheets (Attachment 2).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, demand dropped substantially, but utilization in many on-street parking spaces remained high due to the Castro Street closure and implementation of the Castro StrEATs Program, which allowed businesses to operate outdoors. Adjacent blocks on intersecting streets became the most convenient and popular locations to park. However, due to temporary business closures and work-from-home mandates, at peak times on weekdays, off-street parking demand in the downtown core is about 50% to 70% lower in 2020 than during previous years. Overall, on-street parking demand in the downtown core is 30% lower.

While it is not yet fully known what parking demand and travel behavior will look like after the pandemic, staff anticipates parking demand to return, but parking trends may differ from prepandemic travel behavior. Studies show potential changes to commute travel behavior, such as increased telecommuting due to partial remote work, but a potential decline in the use of transit in favor of other modes of travel, such as driving. Although travel behavior because of commuting is difficult to predict, outdoor dining

and use of parking spaces for short-term loading and customer transactions became popularized during the pandemic and will continue to be important to downtown customers and local businesses. Parking demand might also change with a decline in frequent parkers and a need for more daily parking options.

After the impacts from COVID-19 pandemic have passed and prepandemic activity resumes, it will be important for Mountain View's parking policies and management strategies to be flexible and adaptable in order to support downtown's recovery, regardless of changes to travel behavior postpandemic. A key aspect of the Downtown Parking Strategy will depend on phasing to provide immediate benefits for addressing ongoing parking demands while relying on transportation, parking demand, and economic activity data to implement more long-term items.

### **Stakeholder Input**

Input was also collected from key stakeholders—Downtown Committee, Downtown Business Association, Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association, and developers. The stakeholders spoke about the following issues: parking utilization, management, and impacts of COVID-19.

1. **Parking Utilization:** There is a perception that there is not enough parking in the downtown area and that the public needs assistance finding the underutilized public parking facilities. It is difficult telling people that Parking Structure 3 at California Street and Bryant Street “always has available spaces.” In addition, people who arrive early in the day—like office and retail employees—park in parking spaces close to their business all day. Then, people who need a parking space later in the day, such as dining and retail customers, struggle to find a space. Those “nine-to-five” employees should be directed to less convenient spaces further from the front doors of businesses.
2. **Parking Management:** Spillover is a persistent issue. Information and wayfinding are needed to instruct and educate visitors about where to park and what the restrictions are. Residents are frustrated by spillover on residential streets from office employees and believe the Residential Parking Permit Program is too complicated. When demand is high in the downtown area, retail and dining customers spill over into the surrounding residential neighborhood or Civic Center garage, which is meant for civic business and the Center for the Performing Arts.
3. **COVID-19 Impacts:** The pandemic continues to affect all aspects of parking in Mountain View. People are still working from home, and retail and restaurants are not being frequented. Businesses are not sure what the “next normal” will look like.

In addition, changes on Castro Street have eliminated some of the most conveniently located on-street parking, and any future changes to the street should include parking considerations.

All of these parking issues, stakeholder input, and parking utilization corroborate the findings in the analysis.

## **Downtown Parking Strategy Framework**

### *Guiding Principles*

Based on the parking demand analysis and stakeholder outreach, staff and the consultant are recommending the following key principles to guide development of policies and programs and the deployment of parking resources:

1. A comprehensive package of strategies and solutions is needed to address the full range of parking demands. These solutions need not be implemented all at once. Strategic phasing can help support recovery from COVID-19 in the near term and guide growth and development in the long term. Parking strategies should address the challenges facing downtown today while also providing a flexible framework that supports the needs of downtown tomorrow.
2. There is a shared vision to support a vibrant, thriving downtown. The Downtown Parking Strategy should support and align the needs and priorities of the downtown community, including residents, business owners, employees, and developers. Parking management strategies can play a role in helping local businesses build resiliency.
3. Parking and driving come at a cost to the community. The overall package of strategies should equitably balance public costs and benefits to meet the needs of everyone who lives, works, and visits downtown. The price of parking and other transportation options should reflect the goals and priorities of the community.
4. TDM and sustainability should be aligned with downtown parking needs and priorities. Downtown has evolved over the past decades with the regional transportation network. The implementation of TDM will play an important role in not just managing parking supply, but also ensuring the City leverages local and regional investment in transit and encourages alternative modes of travel, including walking and biking. Also, parking strategies should be aligned with sustainability goals and should help make Mountain View a more environmentally resilient community.

5. Managing the existing public parking supply is the best way to support parking demands in the downtown core. Downtown continues to have available public parking, and the strategy should support operationally resilient parking solutions.
6. Parking strategies and solutions will need to be flexible and broad. Parking management is a “living” process with consistent data and monitoring essential components of success. Parking policies and programs must be adjusted based on results. Market flexibility and a well-calibrated City Code can work together to help right-size the amount of parking that is built in downtown.

### **Solutions Framework: Parking Management, Parking Supply, and Balanced Options**

The Downtown Parking Strategy will develop and evaluate a range of potential solutions in each of three interrelated categories:

1. Parking Management Solutions: Strategies that support more efficient use of existing and future parking supply. Management strategies will include parking regulations (such as time limits, permits, and paid parking), management structures (such as the Downtown Parking District), and supporting programs (such as valet parking service).
2. Parking Supply Solutions: Strategies that provide a framework for creating new public parking supply in downtown. Supply strategies will address shared parking opportunities, parking requirements in the City Code, and partnerships with private developers for funding new, publicly accessible parking.
3. Balanced Transportation Options: Strategies to manage parking demand by supporting and incentivizing alternatives to driving. Strategies for supporting balanced transportation options will include TDM programs as well as transit and multi-modal incentives.

Overutilized parking is often a symptom of success—It is a signal that downtown is a thriving, prosperous, and vibrant commercial center. However, to meet the needs of all users, effective ongoing management of the parking system is key to resolving the challenges and issues identified above and those that future growth could elicit. Whether or not additional parking supply is created, parking management is necessary and helps to provide several key benefits for downtown:

1. It makes cost-effective and land- and resource-efficient use of public resources;



2. It can help manage demand and thereby reduce other impacts from driving, such as congestion, air quality, and greenhouse gas emissions;
3. It provides more flexibility to adapt parking to future changes in the transportation systems, technology, driving habits, user needs, and other uncertainties of the post-COVID-19 world; and
4. It can help make parking more user-friendly by ensuring there is always a space available for users. A typical rule of thumb for parking management is to produce 10% to 15% parking availability in every block, lot, and garage.

The City has yet to use all of the potential parking management strategies and TDM tools available to reduce parking demand and shift travel behavior. The following is a list of potential solutions that the Downtown Parking Strategy will develop and evaluate more fully in the coming months:

1. Identify more effective framework of regulations to manage public parking, including permits and time limits. Solutions will aim to balance the needs of a range of parking users, including customers, retail and office employees, residents, visitors, and delivery services. These management tools should maximize use of alternate modes and improve the spatial distribution of demand.
2. Price parking to support parking turnover and better reflect the true cost of building and operating public parking in downtown. Parking should be priced to manage demand, not generate revenue. However, new revenue is likely and should be returned to the downtown to invest in parking management, TDM, maintenance and improvement of public infrastructure, enforcement, and other expenses.
3. Evaluate changes to the City Code to better align with downtown parking needs and vision. Identify land use regulations that better address new development's impact on public parking. Changes could include improved clarity about when in-lieu fees are preferable to support public parking supply and when private parking should be encouraged, updates to minimum parking requirements, and mechanisms to require and/or incentivize shared parking arrangements.
4. Enhance standards and incentives to encourage the creation and investment in public parking instead of private parking. Private development can be leveraged to help provide parking that serves all downtown stakeholders, by, for example, providing funds for the City to build and manage parking or by allowing public access to private lots.

5. Explore allowing parking in-lieu fees to be used for costs and improvements that manage transportation and parking more broadly instead of just building new parking.
6. Require, encourage, and/or create TDM programs that benefit all downtown users and strengthen participation in the Transportation Management Association (TMA).
7. Explore expanding the parking district to include a larger area of downtown.

***Question No. 1: Does Council agree with the proposed framework principles and solutions for the Downtown Parking Strategy?***

### **Projected Public Parking Shortfall and Potential Solutions**

Public parking is integral to the success of downtown and is a better solution to parking demand than requiring or encouraging the construction of private parking. This is because public parking is flexible and available for various uses throughout the day, which can efficiently manage the various different peaks of those uses. The Downtown Parking Strategy will identify ways to use this valuable public resource more effectively and will provide a long-term framework for creating and managing public parking facilities in downtown.

Part of the challenge of managing public parking is ensuring that there is enough to serve approved growth. In the Fact Sheets (Attachment 2), there is a high-level analysis of the existing and projected demand for parking compared to existing and projected supply. As described in the previous paragraph, this analysis uses a shared parking approach to measure “shared” demand, which is less than the addition of peak demand from each individual use. Figure 7 shows a summary of rough shortfall of parking in and serving the Parking District for each of the scenarios in the Fact Sheets. The analysis focuses on the Parking District (plus public parking that serves the Parking District, such as Lots 11 and 12), since that is where the vast majority of properties are without private parking. Properties outside the Parking District are generally self-parked. While this boundary is porous, the flow is in both directions. For example, patrons might park in a public lot to go to a business outside the Parking District, or an employee parked at an office building might go to a restaurant in the Parking District.

Scenario	Approximate Shortfall in the Parking District <sup>1</sup>
Existing	100 to 200 spaces
Near term (0-5 years)	400 to 500 spaces
Long term (5-10+ years)	600 to 700 spaces

**Figure 7: Estimated Parking Shortfall in the Parking District**

Based on the typical parking demand for the uses that currently exist in the Parking District, there is a small deficit of about 100 to 200 parking spaces. If no parking is built and no parking management strategies are implemented, this deficit is projected to increase to 400 to 500 spaces in the near term and 600 to 700 spaces in the long term.

This long-term scenario is conservative in that it includes growth assumptions beyond known opportunity sites, no new parking built, and no management of existing parking demand. It is also manageable. There are opportunities to better manage current demand through Citywide efforts and require TDM from future development and encourage it from existing development. These actions alone could conservatively reduce parking demand by at least 200 to 300 spaces. Changes to the permit program and other pricing of parking would further reduce demand and encourage use of alternate modes.

Given the parking challenges facing downtown, the City should be flexible and explore solutions that include both supply-side as well as parking management solutions. Currently, the City has the opportunity to secure funding sources and partnerships to invest in supply solutions that would help address the parking shortfall. Alta Housing, the developer at Lot 12, and Marwood, the developer at 701 West Evelyn Avenue, have proposed funding to support the City's downtown parking goals. The availability of potential funding provides opportunities to explore the expansion of parking supply, parking management solutions, or a combination of the two as noted below.

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<sup>1</sup> These numbers are based on the Parking District data (with maximum use of the in-lieu fee) from the Fact Sheets but differ from the Fact Sheets for a number of reasons:

- Figure 7 includes Lots 11 and 12 (237 spaces) and some other street parking which are not in the Parking District but are used for land uses in the Parking District due to their proximity. Lots 11 and 12 are in the existing scenario but not in the projection scenarios since they are expected to redevelop. Other expected parking losses are also deducted from the projections, including the 100 to 300 blocks of Castro Street (45 spaces) and realignment of West Evelyn Avenue for the Transit Center Master Plan (56 spaces).
- The Fact Sheets do not include a target peak vacancy rate of 10%, which adds 300 to 400 spaces of needed supply to each scenario.
- The numbers are not meant to be precise, and these ranges better convey the uncertainty.

### *Expansion of Parking Supply*

Staff recommends further exploring options for expanding the parking supply based on the funding opportunity at hand. These could include potential public-private partnerships, shared parking agreements, and new development standards and incentives for development to provide their on-site parking to the public.

If Council desires to explore potential public-private partnership opportunities to expand parking supply, staff will return to Council with specific options and additional details.

**As indicated previously, this Study Session is limited to discussion of whether the Downtown Parking Strategy should include parking supply solutions generally. Specific options to increase parking supply, such as whether to construct a new parking structure or specific locations for a potential new parking structure, will not be discussed at this Study Session and will be scheduled for a future meeting.**

### *Parking Management Solutions*

As an alternative to new public parking supply, the funds identified above could be used to fast-forward investment in the likely strategies to emerge from the Downtown Parking Strategy that reduce parking demand while continuing to welcome more and more people downtown, including:

1. Implement parking management strategies to manage parking demand and improve efficiency of existing spaces (in combination with the TDM programs to provide other options). These include charging employees and visitors for parking, increasing enforcement of time limits, and expanding the RPP Program with no permit fees for residential areas around downtown.
2. Improve parking management infrastructure, such as mobile payment, real-time parking information, mobile enforcement, and online permit systems.
3. Support TDM programs for both office and service employees. For example, provide free or reduced-cost Caltrain and VTA transit passes, ridesharing subsidies, grants for purchasing bicycles, shared bike and micromobility programs, guaranteed ride home in emergencies, etc. Palo Alto's TMA found that providing free transit passes for service workers in their downtown was successful in increasing transit use and allowing employees to leave their cars at home.
4. Implement TDM programs for visitors. Work with downtown businesses to provide incentives (e.g., coupons, raffles) for visitors to use the Community Shuttle,

Caltrain, VTA transit, or bike to downtown. Continue to invest in and promote the fare-free Community Shuttle to access downtown.

5. Improve parking information to the public through parking wayfinding infrastructure and signage.
6. Increase the supply of bicycle parking downtown for both employee and visitor use.
7. Enhanced pedestrian and bike infrastructure, such as lighting, wayfinding, and streetscape amenities.

Without also investing in management and demand-side solutions, many of these same parking challenges facing downtown today are likely to resurface. If Council agrees with staff's recommended approach to explore using the potential partnership funds toward expanding parking supply, the Downtown Parking Strategy will identify other funding sources to implement the investments above.

### *Summary*

Staff's recommended approach for addressing the public parking shortfall in the Parking District is as follows:

1. Continue to develop and pursue the parking management, TDM, and balanced transportation options identified above and identify additional funding sources.
2. Explore options to expand parking supply, including potential public-private partnerships, shared parking agreements, and new development standards and incentives for development to provide their on-site parking to the public.

If Council agrees with this approach, staff will return with parking supply options, including a framework for partnerships with private developers to support these efforts.

***Question No. 2: Does Council agree with the recommended multi-faceted approach to address the current and near-term public parking shortfall?***

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff is requesting Council input on the following questions:

1. **Does Council agree with the proposed framework principles and solutions for the Downtown Parking Strategy?**

2. **Does Council agree with the recommended multi-faceted approach to address the current and near-term public parking shortfall?**

### **NEXT STEPS**

Following feedback at this Study Session, staff will:

1. Continue to work on the Downtown Parking Strategy based on the proposed framework and Council direction. Staff is anticipated to return with the final Downtown Parking Strategy in late fall 2021 for a formal recommendation.
2. If Council desires to explore increasing parking supply, staff will return to Council to further discuss downtown parking partnership opportunities. After that meeting, the City will move forward on the next steps related to these opportunities.

### **PUBLIC NOTICING**

The meeting agenda and Study Session memorandum were posted on the City's website. All property owners within the Downtown Parking District and all property owners and businesses within the Downtown Parking Strategy Study area were sent notice as well as the Downtown Committee, Mountain View Chamber of Commerce, downtown businesses, the Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association, Moffett Boulevard Neighborhood Group, and Shoreline West Association of Neighbors.

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- Attachments:
1. [October 15, 2019 Study Session Memo](#)
  2. Fact Sheets