

TO: James L. App, City Manager
FROM: Ronald Whisenand, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: Downtown Parking Management Plan
DATE: March 25, 2008

Needs: For the Planning Commission and City Council to accept public testimony on the Downtown Parking Management Plan and provide staff with direction on how to proceed.

- Facts:
1. On May 30, 2007, the City Council directed staff to explore the feasibility and cost of establishing time restricted zones in the downtown as a way of managing the supply of available public parking.
 2. The City retained the services of Parking Design Group (PDG) to assist in this effort. PDG has extensive background implementing parking management plans in cities with similar downtown commercial and entertainment centers.
 3. The latest study identified four key facts about downtown Paso Robles parking:
 - a. The City does not have a parking supply problem in the downtown, even when factoring in approved developments that have yet to be constructed. While there is a sufficient supply of spaces, there is a problem with employees using “prime” downtown parking for extended periods leaving visitors and shoppers with the perception that parking is in short supply.
 - b. Time restricted parking in the downtown core will result in freeing up parking for visitors and customers provided the City is prepared to enforce the new time zones.
 - c. Without a proper funding strategy, the time restricted parking program will operate at a loss on the order of \$100,000 annually.
 - d. A Pay-to-Park strategy is recommended to pay for the program plus meet the Council’s stated goal of parking revenues that will help fund additional parking supplies in the downtown.

Analysis &
Conclusion:

Time restricted parking in the downtown is a tool intended to control parking behaviors that will resulting in a sufficient supply of conveniently located public parking for customers and visitors. The current study reaffirms past recommendations to increase turn-over and free up customer parking by limiting employee use of prime spaces. The method to accomplish this is through time restrictions that will force those with longer term parking needs (3-8 hours) to park 3-4 blocks outside of the downtown core where ample parking is available.

Time restricted parking programs are only as good as the enforcement necessary to ensure parkers obey the time limits. As evidenced in the latest study, enforcement is operationally expensive for any city choosing to manage its supply of parking. For instance, enforcing the 2 and 3 hour parking zones identified in the Parking Management Plan will result in an annual operating expense of \$333,000. Without implementing a “pay-for-parking” strategy, off-setting revenues would be limited to citations issued to parking violators. However, under the best case scenario, those revenues are estimated at \$217,000 leaving a net operating deficit of \$116,000 annually. Those funds would need to come directly from the General Fund and would result in elimination or reduction of other worthwhile City services or programs.

As pointed out in the March 1, 2008 PDG report, as well as past reports on the subject, most quality conscious communities that find themselves in need of managing downtown parking do so through the use of “pay-for-parking” strategies. While the programs vary, they have the common benefit of charging the users of public parking in the downtown a nominal hourly fee to off-set expenses to run the parking program. Pay-for-parking strategies also have an added benefit of a stable and long-term funding strategy for future downtown improvements including the construction of additional public parking facilities.

The pay-for-parking proforma prepared as part of the Parking Management Plan (Table 8) indicates that the City could expect net revenues to a downtown parking fund of about 1.1 million dollars annually. These revenues would be sufficient to meet the long term infrastructure needs of our downtown as it develops consistent with our upcoming Town Centre Specific Plan.

Options:

- a. Direct staff to implement a Parking Management Plan for the downtown using a “pay-for-parking” strategy to off-set enforcement expenses and provide a funding strategy for future downtown improvements including but not limited to additional public parking.

- b. Defer action until the Town Centre Specific Plan identifies the parking needs of a growing downtown, appropriate location for additional off-street parking, and funding strategies to implement long-term parking management strategies.
- c. Amend, modify or reject the foregoing option.

Attached:

Downtown Parking Management Plan

Parking Management Plan



El Paso de Robles, CA

March 1, 2008

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