

**DETAILED MINUTES FOR THE
DOWNTOWN PARKING AND CIRCULATION
ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN
AS DISCUSSED AT THE
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF
SEPTEMBER 24, 2002**

FILE #: **DOWNTOWN PARKING AND CIRCULATION ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN**

APPLICATION: To consider recommending to the City Council, adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration and associated Mitigation Monitoring/Reporting Program per the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and approval of the Downtown Parking and Circulation Analysis and Action Plan.

APPLICANT: City initiated

LOCATION: The project area is bounded by 17th Street on the north, Riverside Avenue on the east, 6th Street on the south, and Olive Street on the west.

City Planner Tina Ryder presented an overview of the Draft Downtown Parking and Circulation Analysis and Action Plan and the environmental review conducted. She indicated that, at the conclusion of the Public Hearing, the Commission may elect to issue a recommendation to the City Council for consideration, or the Commission may request additional information and analysis.

Bill Dvorak of Kimley-Horn made a Power Point presentation.

Tina stated that staff has received a letter from the owner of Natural Alternatives, supporting more parking; a letter from Jerry Martin asking for clarification as to how this program would impact his property; and lastly, a handout from Norma Moye of Main Street which was distributed to the Planning Commission showing locations for employee parking spaces/all day parking spots.

Opened Public Hearing.

Public Testimony

Chuck Mendelsohn - He asked if the study considered housing and retail space in the downtown. Also, he recommended that consideration be given to closing off the downtown from vehicular traffic as in Ausburg, Germany and Cambridge, England.

Dale Gustin - He is concerned about parking and the use of off-street parking spaces by others than the clients of those businesses that have off-street parking. He agrees there is an employee parking problem.

John Roush - He is adamantly opposed to any timed parking or restricted parking in the downtown area, since it would only move the problem from one area to another. Much effort has been placed on creating a synergy in the Downtown: the mix of land uses, the opportunities for walking and enjoying a return to the Downtown, and working together in taking a broad perspective on parking needs. The solution is to increase the parking inventory, to encourage employees to park outside of customer parking areas, to realize the opportunities for additional diagonal parking, and to create parking lots for employees only. As for funding, look at the tax increment.

Norm Bridge - Agrees that there is a parking problem. May need to go back to old meter system. Commuters to San Luis Obispo are parking here all day and taking the bus to work in San Luis Obispo, taking up our spaces.

John Hawley - Agrees with John Roush and Norm Bridge comments. Five years ago there was no parking problem downtown. The City needs to put some money into parking spaces downtown. It won't work to try to get employees to park elsewhere. No parking meters.

Del Velton - Consider a shuttle vehicle whereby you could park outside the downtown area and get a free shuttle into the downtown area. Agrees with points made by other speakers.

Hazel Horn - Agrees with free shuttle idea. The Spring Street lot is not filled very often. Does not want 13th or Spring Streets widened; we would lose our quaintness. Reroute through vehicular traffic at Highway 101 and Highway 46 east down Riverside to help to relieve downtown traffic.

Sally Reynolds - There is no handicapped parking in this town and that is a sham. If parking meters go in people will shop at Wal*Mart and Target where there is free parking. Developer fees should be going into building a parking structure.

Steve Martin - He is speaking tonight on behalf of Main Street and as an ad-hoc committee member. He is happy to recognize the success of Downtown. A lot has happened in the past decade and it's a positive step to be in a position to entertain a discussion of "parking problems". This plan represents long-term planning. We need to continue to grow Downtown and increase the mix of land uses. While there is no true crisis at the moment, let's plan for it now. Main Street brought this item up two years

ago when the City Council was discussing its goals and priorities. As for the action plans, Main Street is willing to help; they can rely on their volunteers to assist with preparation of maps and educational materials, they can survey their members as to funding enforcement, and they can mark spaces "for customers". Main Street opposes parking meters downtown, it's against downtown's character. A new assessment district is not very likely. Need to create a new model, a private/public partnership, and to fund and expand the inventory parking spaces.

Marianne McFee - In favor of closing downtown core to vehicular traffic during daytime peak hours; re-open in the evenings. Continued beautification is important. The walking distance will increase over time.

Jill Ogersolka - Agrees with Main Street opinions. Opposed to parking meters but favors timed parking. Evenings there should be no enforcement of timed parking.

Jim Irving - This is a nice problem to have. To a degree he supports some of the timed parking areas except around the movie theatre and restaurants. Would prefer meter maid over parking meters. Make 13th and Park Street crossing more pedestrian crossing friendly. Questions if Downtown Core, Zone IV, and Core Demand Area are the same. Also, Figure 3 appears to incorrectly show the location of the angled parking.

Theresa Losley - Opposed to meters; likes employee incentive parking.

Norma Moyer -- Main Street. This is great, we're going to solve this problem. 165 businesses downtown and over 1000 employees, and we will have more in the future because second stories are developing while we only have 225 employee parking spaces. Half of the spaces in the lot at 12th and Railroad are people who are arriving early and parking, and carpooling to San Luis Obispo. Loves incentive idea.

Dennis Cassidy - Spoke about the public safety concerns with the proposed temporary closure of 13th Street. Due to the distance between the three river crossings, closure of 13th Street could create logistical problems as it relates to timely responses from the east side to the west side. There are unimproved intersections at Riverside that should be addressed as part of any planned traffic diversion. If the City proceeds with temporary closure of 13th Street, the street should only be closed several hours at the peak periods. Additionally, the City should consider installing lighted crosswalks.

Closed Public Hearing.

City staff and the consultant answered the questions raised during public testimony, as follows:

- 1) Did consultant look at housing and retail space in the downtown? Yes
- 2) Did the consultant evaluate Public Transit as an option? Yes. In the foreseeable future, it is not a viable option.

- 3) How would the City ensure that employee designated parking lots would be used as such. Enforcement is how the issue is addressed.
- 4) Regarding accuracy of the report, are the phrases Downtown Core, Zone IV and Core Demand Area interchangeable? Yes. Figure 3, incorrectly shows the angled spaces.
- 5) Regarding the different surveys, the results of the Main Street inventory was 225 employee parking spaces whereas the Consultant inventory showed 325-327 spaces. The Consultant counted Transportation Center parking spaces.

Planning Commissioner Comments.

Commissioner Kemper: Circulation – Not in favor in any way of temporary or permanent closure of 13th Street. Too many negative impacts. For future consideration may need to consider a separation of grade at the 13th Street railroad crossing; may provide additional parking. Encourage the connection of So. Riverside to So. Spring to pull the traffic off of Spring. **Parking** – bottom line, we need more spaces. Focus on most logical location for a parking structure, which would be on the city hall lot because we already own the property and it's a good location; incentives for employees parking; designate some park and ride lots; encourage public lot signage; include striping and diagonal spaces. If we do customer parking signs, specify downtown customer parking. Not in favor of business assessment district. Not in favor of meters but would be in favor of timed parking, i.e., M-F 9-5 excluding holidays and weekends. **Cost** – City needs to figure out a way to pay. Redevelopment money? Grant money? **General Plan** – Encourage park and ride; encourage So. Riverside/So. Spring Street connection; get a new freeway on ramp built at 4th Street. Agrees with pedestrian light at 13th and Park.

Commissioner Calloway: Opposed to meters. Time restricted parking has pros and cons. Closure of 13th Street, needs to be brief if done at all, Trolley idea – great idea. Short term parking – change to diagonal parking where possible. Mark streets where they are not marked. Not in favor of street widenings. Overall, in favor of report.

Commissioner Johnson: Ad-hoc committee member. Committee went through same comments as those heard here tonight as they worked on this Plan. Need more parking spaces. Funding is a Council function not a Planning Commission function and he would hesitate to suggest how the Council should go about funding more parking. Consultant presentation and Study are right on target. Supports this plan.

Commissioner Warnke: Also ad-hoc committee member. Agrees with Commissioner Johnson's comments. Go along with some of the short-term action plans that do not have a lot of cost – additional angled on-street parking; propose a budget while working with Main Street to come up with some of the signs that would direct the general public to public parking areas. City owned storage facilities near the transportation center may be another area to look at for additional parking, particularly for employees. Likes customer parking idea signs in the downtown area. Loading zone area near Idlers is a good idea for those with a commercial license and should be for others that are commercially licensed, not just Idlers. Long term, need to look at some sort of parking structure. Suggestion

was made of possible parking structure that would have retail on the bottom, parking in the middle and affordable housing on the top. Ideally, public/private parking would be great.

Commissioner McCarthy: Part time member of the ad-hoc committee. Generally agrees with all comments made by the Commissioners; agrees with Commissioner Johnson that the Commission listen to the problems and suggestions and pass it all on to the Council with a reasonable assessment of the whole “ball of wax” – the problems, the potential solutions, and the time frames that may be required to solve the problems. Would be in favor of sending the report on to Council with recommendation that the Commission has reviewed it, heard testimony, and generally agrees that it is a good blueprint for us to use, with added recommendations made by Commissioners that are in addition to what’s in the report and also reflect some of the thinking that was heard in the public comments tonight. Emphasize short term solutions; for the long term, look into parking structure possibilities. Need to also communicate that public transportation was mentioned a couple of times; timed parking got a fair response and metered parking got a negative response.

Action: A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Calloway, and passed 5-0-2 (Commissioners Ferravanti and Steinbeck absent) that the Planning Commission adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Associated Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program as presented.

Action: A motion was made by Commissioner Warnke, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, and passed 5-0 (Commissioners Ferravanti and Steinbeck absent), recommending approval of the Analysis and Action Plan subject to directing staff to prepare a precise minute order regarding this matter for inclusion in the report and materials for the Council’s consideration with recommendation from the Planning Commission to amend the resolution to state that the Commission is in agreement that, in the short term, there should be no parking meters and no assessment districts formed; that restriping of angled parking spaces should be implemented; that directional signage to public parking areas should be added. In the long term, the Commission recognizes that the real solution is an increased supply of parking spaces and that the Council should consider a parking structure as part of the City’s overall strategic plan to evaluate if that is a way to go and consider multi-use parking facilities that would have an element of sponsorship.
