



City Council Agenda Report

Meeting Date: February 11, 2025

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Approved By: Nick Zornes

Subject: Downtown Parking Strategy

COUNCIL PRIORITY AREA

- ☒ Business Communities
- ☐ Circulation Safety and Efficiency
- ☐ Environmental Sustainability
- ☒ Housing
- ☐ Neighborhood Safety Infrastructure
- ☒ General Government

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution approving the Downtown Parking Strategy and find the project exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed Downtown Parking Strategy is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines since there would be no possibility of a significant effect on the environment; and none of the exceptions under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

Study Session on November 12, 2024

BACKGROUND

Project Overview

The Downtown Parking Strategy (“Strategy”) represents the City’s efforts to address current and future parking challenges within the Downtown area and builds on other recent and ongoing

downtown plans and studies. The existing parking conditions in Downtown are documented, including an inventory of the parking supply and demand through a parking occupancy and turnover study of public and private on- and off-street parking facilities. The results of this parking survey provide data to support analysis of actual parking patterns, rather than perceptions of parking patterns, and to establish key parking trends.

Based on key findings from the parking occupancy and turnover study, economic feasibility assessment, and community outreach, the report includes a set of actions designed to increase the publicly available parking supply, better manage demand, adjust parking policies in anticipation of new development, and finance components of the parking program. The recommendations are intended to proactively address existing and future parking challenges in a way that supports the continued success of Downtown Los Altos and supports future change envisioned in the City's policy documents, including the Downtown Vision Plan and Housing Element. Information from past studies and policy documents were reviewed and considered in preparation of the Strategy including the numerous Downtown parking studies prepared over the years.

City Council Study Session

The council reviewed and provided feedback on the draft Parking Strategy at a Study Session on November 12, 2024. A copy of the report and previous version of the draft Strategy is included as Attachment 2. At the meeting, approximately six members of the public provided comment, with most of the comments being against the installation of new parking meters, against parklet pricing increases, and questions about the possibility of a Business Improvement District (BID).

The following is a summary of Council direction for changes to the draft Strategy for which there was a consensus:

- Move parklet pricing adjustments to the mid-term.
- Remove parking meters as an action item and reference them as a consideration in the future if necessary to enhance parking enforcement.
- Move parking wayfinding and modifications to the existing City parking permit program to the short-term.
- Begin the outreach and analysis for the formation of a BID in the short-term but have the formation of a BID as a mid-term item.

Based on Council direction, changes were made to the draft Strategy and are included for Council consideration in Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

Included in the Strategy is a diverse range of actions to address the parking challenges as well as adjustments in policies in anticipation of new development and finance components of the parking program. They were informed by feedback from community members, developers, and other stakeholders. The recommended actions are divided into two phases; the first, "short-term," phase includes strategies prioritized for the next two years and the second, "mid-term," phase includes strategies planned two to five years in the future. Approval of the Strategy sets a roadmap and

action item list for inclusion in the City's workplan over the next approximately five years. The actions identified in the Strategy will be considered separately by the Council and/or other appropriate City Commission or department in the future with further information, analysis, funding sources, etc.

Strategies from both phases are summarized below, with each strategy explained in greater detail in the attached Draft Parking Strategy (Attachment 1).

Short-Term Actions (0–2 Years)

- **Short-Term Action 1 - Mobility Information** - Provide online mobility information for visitors, employees, and residents traveling to/from Downtown including information on multimodal travel options, commuter programs, parking lot locations, parking costs, and parking regulations.
- **Short-Term Action 2 - Parking Wayfinding** - Install wayfinding signage throughout Downtown Los Altos to direct drivers to publicly available off-street parking facilities.
- **Short-Term Action 3 - Begin Outreach Process for Business Improvement District** - Begin the outreach process and analysis for a Downtown Los Altos Business Improvement District (BID).
- **Short-Term Action 4 – Introduce In-Lieu Fee** -Amend the City's Zoning Code to make all of Downtown a single Parking District. Within the Downtown Parking District, institute a parking in-lieu fee.
- **Short-Term Action 5 - Bicycle Parking Improvements** – Develop secure long-term bicycle parking facilities in Downtown Los Altos and follow design standards with short-term bicycle racks (e.g. post-and-ring and inverted U racks).
- **Short-Term Action 6 - Move “Yellow Book” Visitor Permits Online** – Replace the “Yellow Book” customer parking permits with online, all-day visitor parking permits.
- **Short-Term Action 7 - Relocate “White Dot” Employee Spaces** – Relocate “White Dot” Employee Parking Permit (EPP) spaces to less utilized shared parking facilities and new underground parking garages as they become available.

Mid-Term Actions (2-5 years)

- **Mid-Term Action 1 - Form Business Improvement District (BID)** – Create a Downtown Los Altos Business Improvement District (BID) that includes a Transportation Management Association (TMA) as a component of the BID. Establish the area bounded by Foothill Expressway, South San Antonio Road, and West Edith Avenue as a Parking Benefit District (PBD).

- **Mid-Term Action 2 - Shared Parking Agreements** - Direct the TMA to pursue shared parking agreements with private off-street lot owners to better utilize the existing parking resources within Downtown Los Altos. Require that developers removing Downtown parking “plazas” replace lost capacity with publicly shared spaces.
- **Mid-Term Action 3 - Adjust Parklet Pricing** – Set the annual cost of a parklet equal to the market value of the on-street parking space(s) to be replaced.
- **Mid-Term Action 4 - Enhanced Parking Enforcement** - If parking enforcement is needed in Downtown Los Altos, update Citywide enforcement practices to include Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) and increase the frequency of parking enforcement by hiring at least one full-time Community Service Officer (CSO) or contract with an outside company who provides these services.
- **Mid-Term Action 5 - Safety Improvements** - If parking plazas in Downtown are replaced with underground or structured parking, increase the perceived safety of the structures through strategies such as emergency blue light phones, camera systems, enhanced lighting, and signage.
- **Mid-Term Action 6 - Accessible On-Street Parking** - Require that developers making changes to on-street vehicle parking on a road segment provide sufficient on-street accessible parking spaces per the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).
- **Mid-Term Action 8 - Maintenance and Upgrades of Parking Facilities** - Repave and restripe public parking facilities and upgrade lots by providing electric vehicle charging stations in facilities. Create an ongoing maintenance schedule.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Resolution and Downtown Parking Strategy
2. November 12, 2024, Council Study Session Staff Report