



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Approve a Program for Paid Parking in Downtown Caltrain Commuter Lots

REPORT IN BRIEF

On December 4, 2012, Council directed staff to return with a new capital project for FY 2013/14 to install pay for parking systems in the North and South Mathilda Overpass Parking Lots and to add proposed parking rates and fees for Council consideration in the FY 2013/14 Recommended Fee Schedule (RTC No. 12-291).

The project was funded in FY 2013/14 (Project Number 830120) with a targeted completion date of FY 2016/17. In August 2016, the City had an opportunity to benefit from cost efficiencies by utilizing an existing City of Berkeley contract allowing other public agencies to purchase the pay for parking system. The Department of Public Works is currently working with the vendor (IPS) and has encumbered funds to purchase the system. Workplans for installing the concrete footings and painting and numbering parking stalls are underway.

Staff has discussed and developed a plan for enforcement of parking fees and the project is on target to be completed by the end of FY 2016/17. Full implementation of paid parking in the downtown lots identified in this report is anticipated to take place in the first quarter of FY 2017/18, contingent upon completion of parking lot striping and installation of meters and staff completion of training required to use the new system.

Installation of the parking permit system will be under the direction of the Department of Public Works. Parking enforcement will be conducted on an ongoing basis as an extension of the existing parking enforcement program under the direction of the Department of Public Safety.

BACKGROUND

In the 2012 Study (Study Issue DPW 12-05), Walker Parking Consultants was retained to perform a technical analysis of the downtown area and various strategies for self-paid parking systems to support the maintenance of parking areas, sidewalks, landscaping and related street amenities associated with the Caltrain commuter parking areas. The study determined the occupancy rates and analyzed the costs and benefits of fee-based parking.

Existing Parking Demand vs. Supply

The consultant's report noted several negative effects of the City's current policy of providing free parking in the City's commuter-serving parking areas near the Caltrain Station. These include:

- The estimated costs to maintain the parking spaces in the facilities studied are not tied to a specific revenue source that offsets the cost of providing these spaces. The City's General

Fund currently funds the maintenance of the lots.

- Between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on a typical weekday, no paid or free parking spaces are available in City parking areas south of the Caltrain Station or along West Hendy Avenue to drivers who wish to park and board a train at the station. The only options for passengers are to park in shorter term spaces with two or three hour limits and then return to move their vehicle to stay within the time restrictions, to park illegally by overstaying time limits in other downtown parking areas, or to park on neighborhood streets several blocks away.

After reviewing the available parking areas in the study area, the consultant noted that throughout the typical weekday, all parking lots south of the Caltrain station are full; however, empty parking spaces were available to the public in the North Mathilda Overpass Lot. The existence and availability of these spaces represented an underutilized resource that would be convenient for all-day users such as train commuters. The lot was improved in 2013 by Legacy Partners as a condition of an agreement made on October 30, 2012, resulting in 118 additional parking spaces for commuter use.

TABLE 1 - EXISTING PARKING SUPPLY

Lot / Description	# Spaces
(1) Caltrain Station parking lot/garage (shown for reference)	439
(2) Mathilda off-ramp - Southbound	38
(3) West Hendy Avenue - the south side of the street between Sunnyvale Avenue and Taaffe Street (approximate)	37
(4) South Mathilda Overpass	30
(5) Evelyn Avenue - north side of Evelyn, between Charles and Florence Streets	39
(6) North Mathilda Overpass	118
Total parking spaces available for commuters	701
Total City owned and/or operated parking spaces	262
Total proposed metered/pay for City parking spaces	225

The parking area identified as lot (3) (West Hendy Avenue) in the above table will not be included in the paid parking program. In evaluating the available infrastructure that would be required for installation and implementation of the meters, it was determined that West Hendy Avenue lacked electrical infrastructure and hence there would be no power source to make it a feasible location for a pay for parking system. The area is not currently an improved roadway and the infrastructure changes that would be required are not included or available in the project budget; in addition, different procedures would be required to implement metered parking in this area because it is a public street.

Therefore, the proposed paid parking program will include the lots identified in the table above as (2), (4), (5) and (6), with charges between \$3 and \$4 for daily parking. Permits will be issued by new electronic parking management equipment that processes payment via debit/credit card. Proposed rates were calculated using rates currently being charged at the Caltrain lot as a benchmark, and

with the goal of managing parking demand: the methodology for this approach is detailed in Attachment 2, “2012 Consultant Report.”

There are currently no direct fees for use of City-owned parking spaces. The cost of maintenance for these parking areas is funded through the General Fund with some funds collected through parking enforcement that benefit the General Fund. Revenue from parking fees will offset General Fund costs of parking lot maintenance and parking enforcement.

The Walker study proposed that parking fees for City-Owned spaces would be calculated based on the current rate for parking in the Cal-Train station. The methodology was explained in some detail; however, at the time the study was written, the rate at the Sunnyvale Cal-Train station was \$4.00 per day. The current rate for parking in the Sunnyvale Cal-Train station is \$5.50 per day.

Staff recommends rates of \$4.00 per day for the lots identified as “Mathilda off-ramp - Southbound”, “South Mathilda Overpass” and “Evelyn Avenue Lot” (lots 2, 4 and 5), and a rate of \$3.00 per day for lot (6) North Mathilda Overpass. The proposed rates will align with the current Cal-Train rates, being low enough to provide incentive for commuters to choose them as an alternative parking location but not so low as to draw additional daily parkers from the Lawrence Station Caltrain stop.

EXISTING POLICY

Downtown Specific Plan, Goal 2: Establish the downtown as the cultural, retail, financial and entertainment center of the community, complemented by employment, housing and transit opportunities.

General Plan, Land Use and Transportation - Chapter 3

Policy LT-5.6b Promote public and private transportation demand management.

General Plan, Housing - Chapter 5

Policy HE-6.2: Promote neighborhood vitality by providing adequate community facilities, infrastructure, landscaping and open space, parking, and public health and safety within new and existing neighborhoods.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Installation of the parking pay stations in the Downtown commuter parking lots (lots 2,4,5, and 6) are categorically exempt review under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15301 (existing facilities) as it involves no expansion of existing uses and solely relates to from operation, repair, maintenance, or permitting, of existing parking lots. The establishment of the parking fees is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15273 when the City Council finds the fees are for the purpose of meeting operating expenses, including employee wage rates and fringe benefits and CEQA Guideline section 15378(b)(4) because it is related to the creation of government funding mechanisms or other fiscal activities that does not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potential significant impact on the environment.

DISCUSSION

Downtown parking commonly used by commuters includes six available parking lots or areas, as

illustrated in Attachment 1 (Aerial Map) and listed in Table 1 above. These parking areas are well placed to serve the parking needs of Caltrain commuters by providing close access to the Caltrain station. Currently, parking in these City-owned lots or areas is free of charge, while parking in the Caltrain parking lot at the station carries a cost of \$5.50 per day for a parking permit.

Parking Fees

One of the considerations of the consultant report is to manage the parking demand via parking fees; i.e., charging higher parking rates for premium spaces, and lower parking rates for less convenient parking. The goal of pricing parking spaces should be to increase parking availability, off-set the City's costs for providing and maintaining those spaces, encourage the use of non-driving modes of transportation, and increase access to the Caltrain station without increasing the acreage used for parking.

The Walker report methodology establishes a City rate that would be competitive when compared to Caltrain's downtown Sunnyvale lot, so that commuters would be incentivized to use the downtown lot rather than move down one station to the Lawrence Station Caltrain stop. Using the rate charged by Caltrain as a benchmark (\$5.50 daily rate), parking rates are suggested as follows:

TABLE 2 - PROPOSED PARKING RATES

Lot	Location	Daily Rate	% of Caltrain Price
(2)	Mathilda Off-ramp - Southbound	\$4.00	73%
(4)	South Mathilda Overpass	\$4.00	73%
(5)	Evelyn Avenue Lot	\$4.00	73%
(6)	North Mathilda Overpass	\$3.00	55%

Parking fees will be reviewed and approved by City Council on June 6, 2017 as part of the FY 2017/18 City Fee Schedule, and each in subsequent years by Council as part of the annual review and approval of the City's Fee Schedule.

Community Outreach and Comments

During community meetings held on October 10 and November 5, 2012, several comments were made by residents that commuters appear to be parking in locations restricted for short-term parking only, presumably because they find it worth the risk of a parking citation compared to the option of searching for a more appropriate parking space. If the City begins to charge for the privilege of parking in the City-owned commuter lots, the most prevalent concern from the nearby residents is the impact from commuter drivers parking on their neighborhood streets -- essentially removing the on-street parking option for the residents who live there. Should this problem arise, the City can consider designating impacted streets as Preferential Parking Zones.

In 2009, the City passed an ordinance designating certain streets in the area of the Caltrain Station as Preferential Parking Zones, which exempt residents with permits from the posted time limits. Within the Preferential Parking Zone, non-permit holders may park on the residential street, but they must adhere to the posted parking restrictions to avoid a citation. The program requires residents within each block to petition the City to authorize the Preferential Parking Zone on their street, and similarly, residents must petition the City to remove the zone. When a block is participating in the

program, on-street parking is limited to seven hours a day on weekdays to discourage all day parking.

Permits for designated zones are administered by the Department of Public Works, and are issued to those who prove residency and purchase a parking permit. Each household is limited to three permits. Permit holders can also obtain a Guest/Contractor Parking Exemption Permit free of charge, which is valid for 14 days for overnight guests or contractors who need to park longer than the posted time limits. It should be noted that Hendy Avenue, originally included in the study as a pay parking area, is designated as a Preferential Parking Zone.

Additional outreach to downtown businesses was conducted by the Department of Public Works in a meeting held on March 3, 2017: additional outreach activities will continue until full implementation of the program is achieved. Signage will be posted in affected lots with a minimum of thirty (30) days' notice, to inform commuters and other parking patrons of the anticipated transition to metered parking.

Expenses Associated with Parking Management Systems

Overall, the expenses associated with a system for paid parking can be categorized as follows:

- Parking Lot Maintenance costs
- Parking Enforcement costs
- Pay for Parking system (implementation cost and recurring costs)

Parking Lot Maintenance Costs

The maintenance cost for the downtown commuter parking areas is approximately \$37,578 per year: this includes the costs for pavement repair and maintenance, striping and painting of stalls, sign maintenance and parking lot lighting. The maintenance cost of the North Mathilda Overpass lot will be paid by a local developer (see note, Table 3 below) through March 2018. This will remove the cost of \$22,204 for the North Mathilda Overpass lot, reducing the cost to maintain the remaining parking areas to \$15,374 per year until April 2018. It should be noted that the maintenance costs will be incurred whether or not the City implements a fee based parking system.

Lot	Name	Spaces	Annual Maintenance Costs
(2)	Mathilda Off-ramp - Southbound	38	\$ 5,571
(4)	South Mathilda Overpass	30	\$ 4,398
(5)	Evelyn Avenue Lot	39	\$ 5,405
(6)	North Mathilda Overpass**	118	\$ 22,204
	Grand Total	225	\$ 37,578

***On October 30, 2012, Council authorized the City Manager to execute an Irrevocable License Agreement with Legacy Partners for the use and maintenance of the public parking lot under the North Mathilda Overpass (RTC No. 12-257). The agreement requires the developer to provide on-going maintenance of the parking area at no cost to the City through March 2018. The agreement allows the City to charge for parking, provided that the developer is given 60-day notice prior to implementation of a paid parking scheme.*

TABLE 3 - PARKING LOT MAINTENANCE COSTS

Parking Enforcement Costs

Areas currently subject to parking enforcement near the Caltrain station include residential areas which limit on-street parking to a maximum of seven hours per day (Monday through Friday), and parking time limits for the commercial/retail lots surrounding the downtown area (primarily three hour restrictions).

The Department of Public Safety is currently budgeted for four part-time Vehicle Abatement Officers (VAOs), allocating 25 hours per VAO per week. When the unit is fully staffed, two VAOs are assigned the primary function of providing parking enforcement throughout the City. This is in addition to the Public Safety Officers and Community Service Officers who enforce parking restrictions City-wide on a case-by case basis.

Additional parking enforcement personnel hours will be required to assure the success of the proposed pay for parking project. Upon review of the program, staff recommends ten hours per week would be required to monitor the four lots twice per weekday, allocating one half hour to each lot as the estimated time to perform enforcement activities. The additional enforcement needed to support this program will cost \$25,891, calculated based on .15 FTE times 10 hours per week, at an estimated fully loaded rate of \$50.00 per hour. This cost is potentially offset by revenue from parking citations (Table 4).

Pay for Parking Systems

After review of the Walker Parking Consultants study and discussion of the available space, anticipated use, and available pay for parking systems, staff has concluded that a pay-by space system will most effectively deliver the level of service contemplated by the study.

A pay-by-space system requires motorists using the lot for daily parking to pre-pay for parking by identifying the designated number of the space where they are parked and using a credit or debit card to pre-pay at a pay station conveniently located in the lot.

The pay for parking system has a robust software interface that can be accessed by an officer for enforcement purposes as well as used by administrative staff to collect operational and financial statistics. An officer conducting enforcement will drive into a pay-by-space lot, open the software on his/her laptop, and access a graphic representation of the lot that shows which spaces have been paid for that day, and which are unpaid. If a vehicle is parked in a space the system shows as "unpaid", a citation will be issued.

FISCAL IMPACT

Table 4 illustrates estimated revenues from fees and enforcement, as compared to the costs of maintenance of the pay for parking stations and enforcement in the parking lots. Revenues from the Pay Parking Program are projected to fully offset the costs of meter maintenance and enforcement for the four proposed commuter lots. Estimated net annual revenue generated from the program is \$98,525 per year.

The initial capital outlay for IPS parking meters is estimated to be \$50,630: this estimate includes delivery, setup and some public outreach, totaling \$34,630, and city crew labor for way-finding signs, striping and construction of base concrete footings totaling \$16,000. Costs for one-time project

design and administration are not included.

Initial capital outlay for the installation of the parking pay stations, as well as signage and striping of parking spaces, will be recovered in the first year of the project. Thereafter the program has the potential to generate \$98,525 in revenue, which will offset the \$35,578 estimated current cost of parking lot maintenance reported in Table 3 above.

Revenues for daily parking permits are calculated using on average occupancy of 80% per lot, based on the Walker Parking Consultant study.

TABLE 4: PARKING PROGRAM ANNUAL ESTIMATED REVENUE vs. EXPENSES

	Spaces	Rate	Projected Annual
Revenue			
Mathilda Off-ramp ¹	38	\$4.00	\$30,400
South Mathilda ¹	30	\$4.00	\$24,000
North Evelyn ¹	39	\$4.00	\$31,200
North Mathilda ¹	118	\$3.00	\$70,800
Parking Lot Revenue			\$156,400
Additional Estimated Revenue from Parking Citations			\$24,500
TOTAL ANNUAL ESTIMATED REVENUE:			\$180,900
Expenses			
Pay Station Maintenance			\$11,556
Additional Operations ²			\$44,928
Additional Enforcement			\$25,891
TOTAL ANNUAL ESTIMATED EXPENSES:			\$82,375
NET ANNUAL ESTIMATED REVENUE:			\$98,525
One-time Installation Cost:			
Pay Station Purchase & Install			\$34,630
Signage, striping & concrete footings			\$16,000
Initial Cost to Implement			\$50,630
First Year Revenue (after cost recovery of installation cost):			\$47,895

¹ Daily parking revenue is based on 250 days/year (Monday-Friday minus 10 holidays)

² Additional Operations include estimated costs for the contract administration and record keeping. This excludes parking lot maintenance costs, which are captured in Table 3 and would be incurred regardless of the initiation of the pay for parking system.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Senior Center, Community Center and Department of Public Safety; and by making the agenda and report available at the Sunnyvale Public Library, the Office of the City Clerk and on the City's website.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve a Program for Paid Parking in Downtown Caltrain Commuter Lots.
2. Do not approve a Program for Paid Parking in Downtown Caltrain Commuter Lots.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Approve a Program for Paid Parking in Downtown Caltrain Commuter Lots.

Prepared by: Elaine Ketell, Management Analyst

Reviewed by: Chief Phan Ngo, Director, Department of Public Safety

Reviewed by: Manuel Pineda, Director, Department of Public Works

Reviewed by: Timothy J. Kirby, Director, Department of Finance

Reviewed by: Walter C. Rossmann, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Aerial Map
2. 2012 Consultant Report