

REPORT

To the Honorable Mayor and City Council
From the City Manager

July 25, 2005

Subject

Downtown Parking Management Plan

Recommendations

1. Introduce the attached Ordinance, which establishes meter rates based on the fair market rate, eliminates time limits, allows for the installation of computerized pay-by-space meters, utilizes Downtown meter revenue for parking and traffic related improvements pursuant to Section 20.121, and provides for modifications to the parking permit program.
2. By motion, authorize staff to allow all Downtown retail, restaurant, and entertainment businesses who purchase validation equipment to issue validations to their customers, in compliance with the Parking Facilities Agreement, without the payment of a per-validation fee to the City.

Executive Summary

On June 6, 2005 staff presented a Parking Management Plan ("The Plan") to the City Council to ensure convenient, efficient, and orderly use of Downtown parking as the magnitude and pattern of Downtown parking demand changes.

The Plan proposed changes to the current Downtown parking system that are summarized as follows:

- Recommendation #1: Establish parking prices on the fair market rate.
- Recommendation #2: Eliminate time limits.
- Recommendation #3: Switch meters in the core area to computerized pay-by-space models.
- Recommendation #4: Utilizes Downtown meter revenue for parking and traffic related improvements pursuant to Section 20.121.
- Recommendation #5: Modify the parking permit program.

In order to implement these changes, an ordinance must be adopted which changes certain parking regulations. Once this is done, physical changes can be made, such as the installation of new meters and signage. The creation of an educational and promotional campaign to introduce the new program to the public can also commence upon the adoption of the ordinance currently under consideration.

Background

With the upcoming opening of the “On Broadway” retail/cinema project, parking patterns in Downtown Redwood City will change dramatically. The number of cars competing for parking spaces will increase significantly, and the hours of activity will shift from a daytime-oriented pattern to an 18 hour/7 days a week pattern. Staff appeared before the Council on April 11 and gave a presentation about these anticipated changes.

The current parking management system was not designed to handle these new patterns of use. Parking meter fees are not in effect during evenings and weekends, which currently aren’t busy periods, but will be in the near future. Current prices are too low in the most active areas to ensure adequate turnover of prime spaces (resulting in a perception of a lack of parking), and use of conventional meters in these areas will be very inconvenient because they only take coins for payment.

Staff has been researching various parking strategies and working with Downtown stakeholders for more than a year, and the Parking Management Plan is the result of this effort. Staff strongly believes that this plan is the best way to accomplish these goals:

- Keep convenient curbside spaces available for customers at all times.
- Create parking opportunities for as many different people as possible.
- Don’t make customers leave early or move their cars to avoid tickets.
- Create reasonable parking options for employees—don’t make them “shuffle” every hour.
- Avoid traffic congestion from “cruising.”
- Create a customer-friendly system.
- Rely more on incentives than penalties.
- Keep the parking system financially self-sufficient.
- Utilizes Downtown meter revenue for parking and traffic related improvements pursuant to Section 20.121.

Adoption of the attached ordinance would implement the various components of The Plan in order to achieve these goals. Attachment 1 includes a brief description of each part of the ordinance and its role in carrying out the Parking Management Plan.

Changes to the Parking Management Plan per the Meeting of June 6

Based on Council and public feedback from June 6, as well as further staff analysis, some improvements have been made to the Parking Management Plan since it was initially presented. These improvements have already been incorporated into the ordinance currently under consideration.

Permits: There was concern that the suggested permit program did not meet the needs of many current permit holders in light of the extended hours of operation of City lots and garages. In particular, there was major concern that many Marshall Garage permit holders who work late and on the weekends would have to pay the \$5 per hour rate after office hours and that this would present a significant inconvenience. This would also represent a change from the current system, in which Marshall Garage permit holders do not have to pay to park in that facility at any time and no specific limitations for the validity of these permits is described in the current code language which governs them. Therefore, to meet the diverse needs of Downtown workers, staff now recommends a more diverse permit program than initially discussed. This program is described in detail in Attachment 2. Three types of permits would be available: Bronze (valid weekdays until

7pm), Silver (valid all day on weekdays), and Gold (valid at all times). This system should accommodate many different needs.

Free Night and Weekend Parking: Staff has concluded that it would be best to alter the area which will be free on nights and weekends slightly from the area shown in the Parking Management Plan. It is recommended that the area with nighttime and weekend prices match the area with the new computerized “pay-by-space” meters. This is the area with the greatest anticipated nighttime/weekend parking demand and it is very logical for it to coincide with the nighttime/weekend pricing more closely. The new boundaries of free night and weekend parking are shown in Attachment 3. This change results in a greater amount of free parking.

Validations: Another concern from the public had to do with validations. Per the Parking Facilities Agreement with the retail/cinema developer, a validation program will be established for the Jefferson Garage, Marshall Garage, and Middlefield Lot. As of the June 6 presentation to the Council it was undecided whether merchants outside of the retail/cinema project would be required to pay a fee for each validation that they issued to their customers. Some felt that requiring payment from other Downtown merchants while *not* requiring it of the project businesses was inequitable. After analysis, staff has concluded that not charging a fee for validations would not result in a major loss of revenue to the parking fund and would not cause significant parking problems because validations will only give customers one to two hours of free parking and they will not be allowed to accrue multiple validations. Therefore, staff recommends that validations be free to all Downtown retail and restaurant businesses that purchase validation equipment.

Library Area Parking Congestion: The area around the Library is very congested, and competition for this parking will probably remain intense. In the initial plan, this was addressed by a slightly higher meter rate near the Library than in the Main Street Parking Lot, which would discourage retail and restaurant employees from parking near the Library. Another measure in the original plan was to meter the City Hall Employee Lot and allow the public to park in spaces not occupied by permit holders (currently this lot is “permit only” until 4:00pm on weekdays). This will add some spaces to the supply available to Library users. Since the June 6 presentation, staff has attempted to decongest the City Hall Employee Lot further with three added measures.

- City fleet vehicles would be moved to the area behind the library, adjacent to the Caltrain tracks.
- City employee permits would only be valid in the City Hall Employee Parking Lot until 6:00pm. Employees working later than that would need to park in the area behind the Library, which is much less desirable for customer parking.
- A limited number of permits would be made available to employees of restaurants and shops for use in the area behind the Library to lure them out of the customer parking areas.

These three added measures, coupled with the originally recommended measures, ought to substantially improve parking availability near the Library. Community Development staff has spoken to Library Director Dave Genesy and he is supportive of these changes.

Remaining Issue

Free Parking for Library Patrons: Some people, including some on the Council, voiced support for exploration of ways to offer the Library clientele free parking opportunities. There are two

possible ways of doing this. One would be to install a validation machine in the Library which would allow people who use Library services to receive free validated parking in the Middlefield Lot, the Jefferson Garage, and the Marshall Garage in the same manner as other Downtown businesses will be permitted to do. This would give Library patrons up to two hours of free parking within a few blocks. The other option would be to equip the Library Parking Lot with the same pay-on-foot equipment that is being installed in the Marshall Street Garage. This would allow the Library to have its own validated lot close-by. This equipment is relatively costly, though, and preliminary staff estimates show that equipping this lot in this way may cost up to \$100,000. However, no action is needed on this issue at this time. If the Council wishes, staff will get bids for such equipment when it gets bid for the new “pay-by-space” meters and the Council may decide at that point.

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Attachments

1. Ordinance Summary
2. Proposed Parking Permit Fee Schedule
3. Night and Weekend Meter Rates
4. Map of Off-Street Parking Facilities
5. Ordinance _____

Attachment 1

A Summary of the Ordinance under Consideration on July 25

The ordinance under consideration implements the Parking Management Plan that was discussed at the City Council meeting of June 6, 2005. The five recommendations of that plan were as follows:

- Recommendation #1: Establish parking prices on the fair market rate.
- Recommendation #2: Eliminate time limits.
- Recommendation #3: Switch meters in the core area to computerized pay-by-space models.
- Recommendation #4: Utilizes Downtown meter revenue for parking and traffic related improvements pursuant to Section 20.121
- Recommendation #5: Modify the parking permit program.

The ordinance includes four parts. Part 1 of the ordinance removes time limits from the Downtown area, per Recommendation #2 of the Parking Management Plan. Time limits outside of the Downtown area—where there are not meters to ensure adequate turnover—have not been changed. The table in Part 1 of the ordinance merely re-states existing time limits outside of the Downtown area, reordered to reflect the removal of Downtown time limits and placed in a table for improved accessibility.

Part 2 of the ordinance implements Recommendations #1 (establish prices based on the fair market rate) and #4 (utilizes Downtown meter revenue for parking and traffic related improvements pursuant to Section 20.121) of the Parking Management Plan. It sets the base rates that were shown in the Plan and also puts into place a mechanism for incremental adjustments, up or down, of those rates in order to maintain the use of parking areas close as possible to the 85% “target occupancy rate” that is ideal for ensuring easy ingress and egress, reducing cruising traffic, and offering parking opportunities to as many different people as possible. A maximum meter rate of \$1.50 is also established.

Part 2 of the ordinance also amends appropriate language in order to allow for the installation of computerized pay-by-space parking meters per Recommendation #3 of the Parking Management Plan. The rest of Part 2 of the ordinance contains other parking meter regulations that are unaffected by the Parking Management Plan and have simply been reordered to fit into this new version of Division 4 of the code.

Part 3 of the ordinance creates a new parking permit program for Downtown, establishing new types of permits, the periods for which they are valid, and the costs of these permits. This implements Recommendation #5 of the Parking Management Plan.

Part 4 of the ordinance also implements Recommendation #5 of the Parking Management Plan. Division 9 regulated *unmetered* parking lots, so the primary change pertains to the parking area behind the Library, which would become a permit-only zone for use by City Hall and Library employees and City fleet vehicles.

Part 5 of the ordinance establishes the effective date of these changes, which would be February 1, 2006.

Attachment 2

Proposed Downtown Permit Program

Permit Type	Valid Area	Valid Times	Monthly Cost	Yearly Cost
Marshall/Middlefield Bronze Permit	Marshall Street Garage and Middlefield Parking Lot	Valid in Middlefield Parking Lot Monday through Friday, from the time at which meters begin operation until 7:00pm; valid in Marshall Street Garage Monday through Friday, from the time at which meters begin operation until 7:00pm	\$30.00	\$330.00
Marshall/Middlefield Silver Permit	Marshall Street Garage and Middlefield Parking Lot	Valid in Middlefield Parking Lot Monday through Friday, from the time at which meters begin operation until 7:00pm; valid in Marshall Street Garage Monday through Friday, all hours	\$35.00	\$385.00
Marshall/Middlefield Gold Permit	Marshall Street Garage and Middlefield Parking Lot	Valid in Middlefield Parking Lot Monday through Friday, from the time at which meters begin operation until 7:00pm; valid in Marshall Street Garage at all times	\$40.00	\$440.00
Perry/Winslow/Main Bronze Permit	Perry Street Parking Lot, Winslow Street Parking Lot, and Main Street Parking Lot	Monday through Friday, from the time at which meters begin operation until 7:00pm	\$40.00	\$440.00
Perry/Winslow/Main Silver Permit	Perry Street Parking Lot, Winslow Street Parking Lot, and Main Street Parking Lot	Monday through Friday, all hours	\$50.00	\$550.00
Perry/Winslow/Main Gold Permit	Perry Street Parking Lot, Winslow Street Parking Lot, and Main Street Parking Lot	All times	\$60.00	\$660.00
Library Parking Lot "C" Gold Permit	Library Parking Lot "C"	All times	\$20.00	\$220.00