



Land Use, Sustainability, and Resilience Committee

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: LAND USE, SUSTAINABILITY, AND RESILIENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS DATE: MARCH 13, 2023

FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WARD: 1

SUBJECT: DOWNTOWN PARKING RATES AND HOUR SCHEDULE UPDATE

ISSUES:

Receive an update on the Public Parking Program and recommend that the City Council approve changes to the downtown parking rates and hour schedule.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Land Use, Sustainability, and Resilience Committee:

1. Receive and file the Public Parking Program update; and
2. Recommend that the City Council approve the proposed downtown parking rates and hour schedule.

BACKGROUND:

On July 19, 2022, the City Council reinstated the previous downtown parking program (rates from prior to July 1, 2022) and asked staff to conduct two community engagement meetings, return to the City Council within three to seven months with an alternative parking program, and allocate American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to offset parking garage costs until the City obtains proceeds from the sale of parking Garages 1 and 2. The motion carried with four aye votes, two no votes, and one councilmember absent.

On September 6, 2022, the City Council received the proposed community engagement timeframe (Attachment 4) for the amended parking rates and hours schedule.

DISCUSSION:

The Public Parking Services Division held two townhall style stakeholder meetings, the first on October 20, 2022, and the second on January 19, 2023, to listen to the downtown community's concerns and to apply their feedback in the development of the amended parking rates and hours schedule. Both community meetings featured interactive workshops where stakeholders were

able to provide their input through handwritten notes and verbal feedback, group sessions were conducted using the *Balancing Act* software and a *Survey Monkey* short-form survey.

The City received 1,861 online simulation submissions to the *Balancing Act* tool, with additional submittals received during the interactive meeting. The average stakeholder engaged with the webpage for a total of 9 minutes and 11 seconds, with a cumulative amount of 776 hours spent on the survey. Deferred maintenance was identified as a priority for investment, with the average survey participant choosing to increase expenditures in this category by approximately \$900,000. Stakeholders have, in general, chosen to reduce the parking fund's reliance on revenues from meters while opting to increase rates in the parking garages. Many comments have suggested that parking should be free, while other commenters suggested that the Parking Fund should be entirely or partially subsidized through general funds / sales tax. Other comments voiced concern over depleting parking inventory in downtown with respect to the surplus of Garages 1 & 2.

The *Survey Monkey* short-form survey collected 682 responses. The survey was developed to drill down on spending priorities identified through the *Balancing Act* budget exercise. 99% of all survey responses were submitted during the three weeks leading up to the second community meeting on January 19, 2023. 54.4% of the respondents wanted the parking fund to pay for Police Foot Patrol/Security, while 29.2% wanted deferred maintenance addressed and 16.4% asked for facility upgrades. This was clearly reiterated by stakeholders at the community meetings, at the Riverside Downtown Partnership Security Meetings, and by City employees. This is a top priority for the downtown parking operation as it impacts the quality of life for those working, conducting business in, and visiting downtown.

A more inclusive, accessible, flexible and affordable downtown parking program was developed as a result of the online *Balancing Act* budget exercise, *Survey Monkey* short-form survey, community engagement meetings, meetings with the Greater Riverside Chamber of Commerce and the Riverside Downtown Partnership, and one-on-one meetings with City Council Members. The Parking Services division has the responsibility to offer accessible, affordable, and available parking to all sectors of the public, which will encourage downtown business activity, invite more visitors and welcome special events. In addition, the parking facilities must be safe, clean, and well maintained to add to the quality of life of the public and to deliver a positive customer experience. These basic requirements will be paramount moving forward and will be funded appropriately.

The proposed parking rates and hour schedule (Attachment 1) has several key aspects, summarized below, that will financially support these requirements.

1. The City will retain completely free on-street and surface lot parking on weekends (Saturdays & Sundays) while charging for parking in garages.
2. The "Parking Your Way" program offers free parking downtown with 60-minutes in the Garages and Lots and 30-minutes in the On-Street Metered Spaces using a web-app or the traditional ticket system in Garages. The City has previously not offered free parking on-street or in surface lots, and this expansion makes free parking more accessible, affordable and flexible to all patrons
3. "Downtown 24/7 Permit" program offers an affordable parking option 24/7 in all Garages and Lots using a web-app. This new program is available for all downtown businesses, employees and residents and starts at \$115 per month with incremental increases applied over an 8-year period

4. The “Discounted Employee Parking Permits” program is more robust and inclusive by raising the qualifying wage rate to \$24 per hour to be adjusted in the future based on a regional wage index published by the State every year. A web-app will assist with program management and the DEPP monthly fee will be used to cover the administrative costs. This rejuvenated program is the most affordable permit parking option for a broader range of downtown employees. Qualifying applicants will receive a flexible permit that can be used on a daily basis for a 12-hour increment starting at the time of their arrival, the permit cost will start at \$24 per month and be adjusted alongside increases to the qualifying wage rate. The cost of the permit may be covered by the business owner.
5. The “Pre-Paid” parking option is widely accepted and utilized by Festival of Lights patrons. This payment option provides a \$5 discount off the Pay at Event rate. It is being expanded to all Special Events throughout the year due to its popularity and will utilize a web-app.
6. Monthly unreserved and reserved daytime permit holders are receiving expanded hours from 5:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and the annual monthly increases are minimal at \$15 to \$20, respectively. The permit cost increases will be stretched over an 8-year timeframe and will be capped at that point. New reserved permits will not be issued and will be phased out after 10-years.
7. Parking rates in the Garages will be \$1.25 every 30-minutes with a \$15 Daily Max. The Garages will operate 24/7 offering many more parking options to the downtown community.
8. Parking in the Lots will be \$1.50 every 30-minutes with no time limit and will operate Monday-Friday 5:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
9. Parking in the On-Street Metered Spaces will be \$1.50 every 30-minutes with no time limit and will operate Monday-Friday 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the Justice center and 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. in all other downtown areas.
10. Special event organizers with registered Special Event Permits will no longer be subject to pay for meter fees when closing streets to accommodate an event.

Additionally, this staff report is accompanied by a Rate and Hours Comparison table (Attachment 2) that provides a consolidated overview of current and proposed rates and hours, and the program that was rescinded by the City Council in July 2022. This table is also included as part of staff’s presentation.

The Parking Fund (570) 3-Year Projection (Attachment 3) has been updated to reflect the financial impact of an amended downtown parking rates and hour schedule.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The new Parking Rates and Hours Schedule adheres to **Strategic Priority 3 – Economic Opportunity**. By working with the Downtown business community to adjust the recently adopted parking program elements, the City is furthering Goal 3.3: Cultivate a business environment that welcomes innovation, entrepreneurship and investment. This item aligns with the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – This item is being brought forth in response to community feedback regarding the recently updated parking program elements.
2. **Equity** – Staff worked diligently to ensure that everyone had a seat at the table in discussion of new parking rates and hours schedule.

3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The adoption of new rates will minimize revenue losses to the parking fund and allow for critical investments in security and deferred maintenance.
4. **Innovation** - The new rates and hours schedule incorporates innovative new technologies and rate structures to meet community needs.
5. **Sustainability and Resiliency** - The proposed program revisions are neutral towards this cross-cutting thread.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact resulting from this report.

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availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Proposed Parking Rates and Hour Schedule
2. Rate and Hours Comparison
3. Parking Fund (570) 3-Year Project
4. Proposed Community Engagement Timeframe
5. Presentation