



# Utility Services/Land Use/ Energy Development Committee

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: UTILITY SERVICES / LAND USE / ENERGY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS**      **DATE: DECEMBER 12, 2016**

**FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**      **WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: DOWNTOWN PARKING STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF TWO-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENTS AND RATE ADJUSTMENTS - DIRECT SUBMITTAL**

## **ISSUES:**

Receive a presentation on the Downtown Parking Strategic Plan and recommend that the City Council approve a two-year implementation plan to improve the program and ensure its sustainability.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Land Use Committee:

1. Receive a presentation on the Downtown Strategic Parking Plan; and
2. Recommend that the City Council approve a two-year implementation plan to include rate changes and program improvements.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In February 2016, the Public Works Department issued a Request for Proposals to develop a Downtown Parking Strategy. Dixon Resources Unlimited (Dixon) was selected for the project to assess the current parking conditions and develop a Strategic Parking Plan to help the city plan for future parking needs through progressive parking strategies to maximize the use of the existing parking supply. The plan developed provides an overview of existing conditions, evaluates current occupancy rates, considers the loss of parking related to several planned projects and recommends strategies for parking management, operations, technology and future long term capital needs.

The City's inventory of public parking facilities encompasses a variety of surface lots and garages within the study area which encompasses the area bounded by Third Street to the north, Fourteenth Street to the south, Mulberry Street to the east, and Brockton Avenue to the west. The study area includes 2,602 on-street parking spaces of which 1,030 are metered; 2,044 parking garage spaces; and 1,188 surface lot spaces.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### *Parking Occupancy*

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Dixon assessed the parking program which included an occupancy evaluation of both on and off-street inventories to help identify key strategies for optimal parking management. They conducted a count of all vehicles parked within the study area on two days when there were no special events in the downtown area to identify typical use of the parking inventory. Below are some of the key findings:

1. There was ample parking within a short walking distance of high occupancy areas.
2. The average occupancy rate on-street was at 40% on a Thursday and 37% on a Saturday, occupancy under 85% is considered optimal.
3. Parking garage utilization was at 80% or higher on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights at midnight in Garages 1 and 2.
4. Parking in the peripheral areas experienced lower occupancy levels.

### *Stakeholder Input*

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An important element of developing the plan was obtaining stakeholder input. Dixon facilitated three stakeholder meetings where feedback was sought from the public regarding concerns, wishes, and priorities for the parking program. During the meetings, it was confirmed that the city's facilities are an important component of accommodating customers and visitors. The key issues raised by stakeholders included:

1. Safety and security in the parking garages.
2. Increased wayfinding signage.
3. Improved special event parking planning.
4. More parking garages.
5. More on-street parking near retail.
6. Maintenance of facilities.
7. Lack of parking near the museums.
8. Increased timed loading zones near businesses.
9. Meters, ease of use.

When stakeholders were asked to rank the following five priority needs for the parking program they ranked them in the following order.

1. New parking garage

2. Security
3. Wayfinding signage
4. Automation
5. Upgraded parking meters

### *Projects Reducing Public Parking*

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As part of the study, several upcoming downtown projects that will reduce the parking inventory were considered. Planning for these projects provides opportunities for implementing parking management techniques to provide sufficient parking and minimize potential impacts. There are six current and future projects which were identified:

1. Lot 19, on Market Street in between Tenth Street and Eleventh Street, will be eliminated in late 2016 as well as some nearby on-street parking, for the Chow Alley project. (90 spaces)
2. Lot 27, on the corner of Lemon Street and Mission Inn Avenue, may be replaced with a boutique hotel, subject to Council approval. (37 spaces)
3. Lot TW, on the corner of Main Street and University Avenue, was removed during the fall of 2016 for the Imperial Hardware redevelopment project. (29 spaces)
4. Lot 46, on the corner of Main Street and Ninth Avenue, is designated for a mixed-use project in 2017. (36 spaces)
5. Lot 42, on the corner of Market Street and Sixth Street, will be eliminated when the Stalder Building is redeveloped in early 2017. (91 spaces)
6. New and expanded Riverside Transit Authority (RTA) bus stops have eliminated on-street parking primarily along Market, University, and Lemon. (58 spaces)

Overall, current conditions suggest that the weekday peak demands, both including and excluding the loss of 341 surface lot and on-street spaces, can be accommodated within the existing parking supply in Downtown Riverside. The report suggests that sufficient parking exists within acceptable walking distances of two to three blocks. To mitigate the anticipated loss of parking, it is recommended that the city utilize rate strategies that will encourage use of underutilized facilities in the perimeter areas and reduce demand in high occupancy areas.

### *Recommended Strategies*

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Dixon identified many strategies that can be utilized to maximize our parking resources and improve our overall operations. It isn't recommended that all of the strategies be implemented at this time, but instead it is suggested that the City select those that are the best fit for our unique needs. Based on an understanding of user needs and demands, the recommendations below are presented for consideration.

1. The strategies to redistribute parking into under-utilized facilities is to use rates to change behaviors for regular long-term parkers. Providing lower cost parking rates in under-utilized facilities will encourage parkers to move into those facilities, opening up capacity in higher demand locations.

2. A pay-to-stay rate model was intended to reduce on-street occupancy for those who wish to stay for an extended period of time or they can choose to park on-street for a premium. The Strategy concluded that the City should have a comprehensive approach to managing on and off-street parking, parking rates and technology upgrades in order to fulfill its role in the economic vitality of the downtown area.
3. Direct drivers utilizing wayfinding signage and brand the parking facilities to make it clear to drivers where the public parking facilities are located. The exterior markings should display the branding of a logo that could include the Raincross bell and each facility to have be unique by name or color scheme so they are easily recognized as drivers approach each facility.
4. Utilize an application program interface (API) for the public to access via a mobile application in order to direct drivers before they arrive towards underutilized parking facilities. As the facilities reach 85% capacity, the City has the ability to relieve traffic congestion via the application by displaying in the application where parking is available.)

There were additional recommendations that the City could consider in the future. Some of those include the expansion of on-street paid parking near the Convention Center and hotels, a policy for valet operations within the right-of-way, an increase of the base parking fines, investment in garage automation, and a capital improvement project to build a new parking garage. The implementation of these additional recommendations will be reviewed and considered for future implementation as funding is available.

### *Priority Needs - Operations*

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Facility maintenance is a service component which was identified as a top priority need to sustain and maintain the facility infrastructure and provide a quality customer experience. This has been a challenge as cost-cutting measures have led to a reactive approach to maintenance items in order to stay within the budget. Repairs to mechanical components have increased as the facilities age. Currently, there is no reserve fund to pay for significant capital costs should there be an emergency repair required. To extend the life of the functionality of these items, there is a need to set a periodical maintenance schedule of items such as elevators, lighting and fire sprinkler heads. Lastly, a facility maintenance position was not filled as wage regulations required increased salaries, so increased funding for routine maintenance staffing is needed.

Another immediate need that was expressed by the stakeholders was safety and security within the parking garages. In order to address these concerns, cameras and regular security staffing are recommended. This could also be mitigated by upgrading the parking garages to automation, as recommended in the Strategic Plan and reallocate the current garage attendants to act as ambassadors within the parking facilities.

### *Priority Needs – Garages*

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Garages 1 and 2 were built in 1961 and were constructed using cast-in-place post-tensioned concrete slabs and beams. In 2007, the facilities underwent structural repairs and architectural updates that were expected to expand the life of the structures by an estimated 25 years. However, evaluations since that time have identified issues indicating that replacement may be required sooner than expected. Regular monitoring and repair of the facilities to ensure their structural integrity is required, adding to operational costs. In October 2014, both facilities had historic restoration treatment of the concrete and grout infill at joint to slab connections to reduce

deterioration.

In 2016, Garage 2 had additional repairs to reduce standing water and replace rain barriers that deteriorated over time. Garage 1 has been scheduled for an inspection and it is expected that additional repairs may need to be scheduled within the next nine months. Based on the recent repairs of these facilities, it is imperative the City consider the expenses to maintain these facilities and begin developing plans to construct replacements.

In addition to the need to address the future replacement of Garages 1 and 2, it was recommended that the city also consider additional parking facilities to meet future demand. Two key areas were identified for potential consideration, the justice center area and the museum area.

Stakeholders consistently expressed the need for increased capacity for special event parking, particularly near the Riverside Municipal Auditorium (RMA). This facility has no parking for event attendees and they must rely on outlying parking options. A new structure in this area could serve the RMA as well as the Museum and the many downtown businesses.

The justice center experiences very high demand during regular weekdays. With the development of the Chow Alley project, parking resources will be impacted. While there is capacity in areas a few blocks from the Justice Center, there are also opportunities to develop a parking structure on existing parking lots that can provide a long term resource to meet demands as they grow in the future in this key location.

#### *Priority Needs – Meters*

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Currently, the City has a combination of single and 79 multi-space meters that were first installed in 2008. The communications providers discontinued 2G support to the multi-space meters which affected their ability to communicate to the server and could not process pay-by-phone payments. The City upgraded the communication modems to keep them in a serviceable condition however, the credit card processing regulations changed and impacted the meters controllers. The controllers were not capable of securely processing credit cards therefore, the controllers were also upgraded. These updates have extended the life of the meters however, the meter housing will no longer be supported as the manufacturer has discontinued the parts. In the very near future, the 79 multi-space meters will need to be upgraded.

#### *Priority Needs - Signage*

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As recommended in the parking strategic plan, the signage for the various facilities are varied and lack consistency and branding. Improved signage along with a technology upgrades can improve parking utilization and overall traffic circulation downtown by investing in systems to guide drivers into parking facilities with the use of digital wayfinding signs at the key entrances to the city from the freeway. With an inter-connected system you can easily identify parking facilities with availability and better manage and utilize the many parking resources that are available.

#### *Proposed Implementation Plan*

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Through the process of developing the strategy, many needs were identified which if implemented, would truly improve parking downtown. However, the parking fund does not have the capacity to fund improvements with the current revenues. The parking fund is a self-supporting operation with revenue paying for all operations. The goal has always been to keep rates low, to support the health of downtown businesses. To that end, there have been no rate

increases to parking downtown since 2010. However, the cost of operating the program has steadily increased as additional parking facilities have been added, the minimum wage has increased, and increased activity in the downtown area has created a greater demand on our parking facilities.

To ensure the parking fund is sustainable and to provide for greatly needed enhancements, a number of suggestions made by Dixon have been selected and are recommended for consideration to provide additional revenue to fund improvements and to utilize demand based rates to encourage maximum utilization of all of the City's parking resources. This combined goal should help to not only fund future parking needs, but also improve the customer experience for those parking downtown, by ensuring there is adequate availability of parking throughout the downtown.

### *Parking Rates*

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The Public Works Department provides oversight of the parking operation in order to ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources, safeguard the financial viability of the public parking operation, and continually provide the community with excellent service. To keep rates low for the users, there have been no changes to the on and off-street rates since 2010 which is affecting the sustainability of the program as the revenues have not increased at the same rate that expenses have.

Dixon was asked to provide within the Strategy report, a rate model to support the expected changes of parking supply and demand. Staff reviewed the model recommendations, considered the stakeholders' feedback and developed proposed rates that would balance change from the current rates. The rate recommendations represent a holistic approach to the management of parking and parking rate changes that are tied to downtown projects which affect occupancy of the facilities.

The proposed two year implementation plan is proposed to allow for implementation of rate changes over a two year period, to lessen the impact to customers. The first year will focus on on-street rates to bring the rates to a level that is higher than the rates charged in garages, encouraging long term parkers to utilize the parking garages and open up on-street parking for short term customers. Funds generated during the first year will be limited and are recommended to fund the elements that can be achieved relatively quickly, and at a low cost. Items would include enhanced security, maintenance and signage.

The second year will focus on rate adjustments in the parking garages. The rates proposed are intended to encourage increased use of outlying facilities, to better utilize parking resources. Increased funding in the second year is recommended to be invested in technology upgrades such as upgraded meters and automation. In subsequent years, funding can be earmarked for the more significant long term capital needs.

In order to fulfill the requested improvements and prepare for a capital improvement plan, the Public Works Department recommends implementation of the following parking rate plan:

### *Proposed to take effect April 1, 2017*

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#### Garages

1. Reduce the 90-minute free parking option to 60-minute free parking.
2. Promote merchant validation to gain more participation.

3. Phase out reserved monthly permit parking in garages and lots through attrition to increase overall parking capacity.

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*Proposed to take effect July 1, 2017*

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Increase Festival of Lights parking rate from \$5 to \$10.00 upon entry.

**Garages**

Increase the daily max from \$8.00 to \$10.00.

**Meters**

1. Extend the meter operation outside of the Justice Center from the end time of 5:00 p.m. to a new end time of 6:00 p.m.
2. Promote the token program and set a maximum of 200 discounted tokens per downtown business per month. Business may purchase additional tokens at the regular price.
3. Increase rates in Justice Center from \$1.50 per hour to a demand based rate:
  - a. \$2.00 per hour from hour 1 to 6
  - b. \$2.50 per hour thereafter.
4. Increase rates in Non-Justice Center metered areas from \$1.00 per hour to \$1.50 per hour.

**Surface Lots**

1. Increase monthly unreserved permit rates from \$40.00 to \$50.00.
2. Increase monthly reserved permit rates from \$90.00 to \$100.00.

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*Proposed to take effect July 1, 2018*

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**Garages**

1. Charge monthly unreserved permit rates to encourage more use of underutilized facilities and reduce in congested facilities.
  - a. Increase monthly rate in Garage 3 from \$60 to \$80.00.
  - b. Monthly rate in Garage 7 to remain \$60.00.
  - c. Increase monthly rate in Garages 1, 2, 4 & 6 from \$60.00 to \$70.00.
2. Implement a Discounted Employee Permit program for qualifying part time, minimum wage employees. Monthly permit cost set at \$25.00.
3. Increase reserved monthly permit parking in Garages 1 and 2 to \$100.00; Garage 3 to \$110.00.

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*Proposed to take effect October 1, 2018*

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1. Charge a \$5.00 flat rate on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.
2. Implement a special event parking fee of \$5.00 when events expect to use a minimum of 600 spaces.

The rates proposed in this plan are competitive to other downtown parking facilities as shown in the following table of current parking garage rates in the immediate area.

Garage Location	Current Rates			
	Hourly Rate	Max Daily Rate	Unreserved Monthly	Reserved Monthly
City of Riverside	\$2.00	\$8.00	\$60	\$90
Mission Square	\$4.00	\$20.00	\$55	\$70
Mission Inn	\$3.00	\$15.00	\$60	N/A
Riverside County	\$2.00	\$8.00	\$65	\$107
Marriott Riverside	\$3.00	\$12.00	N/A	N/A
Hyatt Place	N/A	\$12.00	N/A	N/A

The revenues from the modified rates will be used to improve the program from a maintenance aspect, overall services to the public, and enhancements as requested by stakeholders.

The attached two-year implementation plan includes the rate increases and enhancements that are recommended for consideration.

The Public Works Department also recommends the continuance of free evening parking at on-street meters and surface lots as designated in the Parking Rate and Hour Schedule as well as a comprehensive marketing program to launch the implementation plan components to take effect April 2017.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

As recommended, the proposed rate adjustments are anticipated to increase the annual Parking Fund revenue by \$530,000 in FY 17/18 and by \$680,000 in FY 18/19. Implementation of the proposed technology, security, wayfinding and maintenance improvements in fiscal year 17/18 is estimated to be \$400,000. The improvements proposed for fiscal year 18/19 are estimated to be \$800,000 and will be incorporated into the future budget for that year.

Prepared by: Kris Martinez, Public Works Director  
 Certified as to  
 availability of funds: Scott G. Miller, PhD, Chief Financial Officer/ City Treasurer  
 Approved by: Al Zelinka, FAICP, Assistant City Manager  
 Approved as to form: Gary G. Guess, City Attorney

### **Attachments:**

1. Proposed Implementation Plan
2. 2016 Strategic Parking Plan Executive Summary
3. 2016 Strategic Parking Plan
4. Presentation