

Sacramento Central City Parking Master Plan Background Information for Stakeholder Meeting #4 August 25, 2005

Introduction

In a meeting on August 2, 2005, the Sacramento City Council approved a resolution that identified a set of goals and objectives to guide parking policy for the Sacramento Central City. The nine goals approved in that resolution were as follows:

1. Support the citywide goals of economic development, livable neighborhoods, achieving sustainability and improving public safety
2. Supply parking to meet need
3. Use time limits, rates and enforcement to manage parking supply efficiently
4. Modify the Residential Parking Program to manage the retail/residential interface
5. Minimize the negative impacts of parking
6. Make parking safe, secure, attractive and convenient
7. Operate City-owned parking in a financial sound manner
8. Promote alternative modes of transportation and walkable communities
9. Provide transportation options to encourage use of existing parking supply

For each of these nine major goal statements, the resolution approved by the City Council also identified a set of specific objectives. The City Council directed staff to work with its consulting team to develop recommendations for the Central City Parking Master Plan that would lead to attainment of those objectives. In the section below, the detailed objectives for each goal are identified and the consultant's recommendations corresponding to each objective are provided in italics.

In subsequent sections, the results of the consultant's inventory and occupancy analysis are presented along with the assessment of parking sufficiency for expected future development conditions. A final section outlines an approach to a case study in the mid-town entertainment area that the City Council directed the staff and consultants to pursue.

Policy Recommendations

1 Support the citywide goals of economic development, livable neighborhoods, achieving sustainability and improving public safety

- 1.1 Ensure that adequate parking is provided with new development to prevent adverse impacts on existing land uses and to support a synergistic mix of land uses including office, residential, retail, restaurant and entertainment;
 - 1.1.1 *Maintain current parking minimums for non-residential development*

- 1.1.2 *Increase the parking minimums for residential development to match parking demand in other similar cities and observed conditions in Sacramento*
- 1.1.3 *Require off-street parking for all retail development in the central business district (C-3 zone) and in the arts and entertainment district unless adequate publicly available off-street parking exists within a 1,000 foot radius of the subject site*
- 1.2 Adopt City policies and standards that support new development in the Central City
 - 1.2.1 *Remove limitation on the maximum amount of parking that can be provided with new Central City development*
 - 1.2.2 *Adopt City policy and guidelines to allow for “in-lieu-of-parking” fees for development of less than the minimum required parking*
- 1.3 Allow flexibility in City policy to tailor requirements to the nature of new development proposed
 - 1.3.1 *Modify Zoning Code to permit reduction of parking minimums when convincing evidence of vehicle trip demand or shared parking can be demonstrated that will reduce the need for new parking*

2 Supply parking to meet need

- 2.1 Use parking minimum (ratios) to ensure developers provide most of the new parking needed;
(See Recommendations from Section 1)
- 2.2 The City of Sacramento should act as a broker when feasible to supply parking when the private sector does not;
 - 2.2.1 *Act as a broker for agreement among business owners to supply additional publicly available parking in the Mid-town entertainment district either by constructing new parking or by making private parking available in the evenings and on weekends*
 - 2.2.2 *Consider brokering agreements among businesses owners to supply additional publicly available parking in other areas as the need arises*
 - 2.2.3 *Consider use of a Benefit Assessment District to fund new parking where there is a deficiency of parking for existing commercial land uses*
- 2.3 Take a strategic approach to parking master planning that will allow short-term decisions to be made consistent with long-term strategies or plans;
 - 2.3.1 *Formulate a City policy to permit interim use of vacant lots for parking with exemption from some or all of the requirements for long-term parking when there is a demonstrated need that is limited in time and is consistent with a longer-term master plan for the site and immediate area*
- 2.4 Provide adequate monitoring of parking supply and utilization to be able to identify deficiencies or conflicts when they develop.
 - 2.4.1 *Conduct occupancy counts for all publicly available parking in the Core (Focus Area 1) and Midtown (Focus Area 2) at least every three years to identify deficiencies*

- 2.4.2 *Track additions and subtractions of parking and parking variances as new development occurs*
- 2.5 Pursue opportunities to increase the amount of parking provided by existing facilities
 - 2.5.1 *Consider striping spaces in un-metered on-street parking to increase the number of parking spaces provided*
 - 2.5.2 *Consider re-striping on-street and off-street spaces to increase the number of spaces provided*
 - 2.5.3 *Consider use of angle parking on streets where the angle parking will not interfere with safe traffic operations*

3 Use time limits, rates and enforcement to manage parking supply efficiently

- 3.1 Establish priority for parkers for each type of parking;
 - 3.1.1 *Recognize residents as the priority in Residential Parking Permit area and shoppers, visitors and other short-term users as the priority in Core on-street and City-operated off-street parking in Downtown Plaza and Old Sacramento*
 - 3.1.2 *Set target mixes of short-term and long-term parkers in other City-operated garages to establish priorities for parkers*
 - 3.1.3 *Recognize commuters and other long-term parkers as the probable priority in other off-street facilities*
- 3.2 Use time limits to make sure priority parkers can find parking;
 - 3.2.1 *Where appropriate, reduce the time limit from 2 hours to 90 minutes to discourage employee parking*
 - 3.2.2 *Reduce time limits for long-term on-street spaces to five hours to facilitate use of spaces by commuters employed in the immediate area*
- 3.3 Establish rates that encourage efficient use of spaces;
 - 3.3.1 *Use rates to maintain occupancy rates in City-owned facilities at or below 85% of total capacity to insure adequate access to parking for priority users*
 - 3.3.2 *Reduce the effective short-term rates in the Core area off-street facilities through an expanded merchant validation program to encourage use of the off-street spaces by shoppers and visitors and to reduce the overall demand for on-street spaces*
 - 3.3.3 *Increase the on-street meter rates in the Core area to discourage long-term use of Core area metered spaces by commuters*
 - 3.3.4 *Increase rates at long-term metered spaces to reflect the rates for nearby off-street facilities*
- 3.4 Enforce parking restrictions and regulation to ensure the appropriate use of on-street parking;
 - 3.4.1 *Strictly enforce Disabled Parking, Loading Zone, Residential Permit Parking, time limits and metes throughout the Central City*

4 Modify the Residential Parking Program to manage the retail/residential interface

- 4.1 Operate Residential Permit Parking (RPP) areas in a way that protects the residential character of the neighborhoods and ensures adequate parking availability for residents while also supporting the needs of small, neighborhood-supporting business located in or adjacent to the areas;
 - 4.1.1 *Extend parking restrictions and enforcement in Residential Permit Parking zones beyond 6 P.M.*
- 4.2 Adopt policies that provide greater consistency and clarity in the Residential Permit Program areas;
 - 4.2.1 *Modify RPP ordinance to establish criteria for creating new zones or annexing neighborhoods into RPP zones*
- 4.3 Provide employee permits in Residential Permit areas if there is a surplus of parking (criteria to be defined).
 - 4.3.1 *Identify blocks in RPP zones where there is surplus daytime parking (criteria to be defined) and sell a limited number of day-time parking passes to local businesses for employee or customer parking*

5 Minimize the negative impacts of parking

- 5.1 Minimize the visual intrusion and other negative environmental impacts of parking;
 - 5.1.1 *Maintain existing requirements for lighting, landscaping, drainage and other improvements for permanent new parking*
 - 5.1.2 *Adopt City policies to encourage use of ground floor for retail in new parking structures*
- 5.2 Minimize the land devoted to parking in the Central City;
 - 5.2.1 *Maintain existing City policy to prohibit the addition of new stand-alone parking without associated parking-generating uses*
- 5.3 Reduce the adverse impacts of commuter parking in residential neighborhoods; *(See Recommendations from Sections 1 and 4)*

6 Make parking safe, secure, attractive and convenient

- 6.1 Provide adequate maintenance of City-owned parking so that it is safe, secure, clean and attractive for its users
 - 6.1.1 *Use Parking Fund to ensure adequate maintenance, cleaning and security of the City's parking assets*
- 6.2 Make the use of on-street and other City-owned parking easy and convenient through information, good signage, convenient payment options, and logical access and exit points.
 - 6.2.1 *Include information on privately-owned but publicly available parking on the City's web site*
 - 6.2.2 *Provide additional information and signage for bicycle parking in publicly available parking facilities*

- 6.2.3 *Pursue additional branding of the City's parking facilities*
- 6.2.4 *Consider dynamic parking information system to help shoppers and entertainment customers locate available parking*
- 6.2.5 *Continue to replace old meters with new meters or pay stations that accept multiple payment methods including coins, bills and credit cards*

7 Operate City-owned parking in a financially sound manner

- 7.1 Ensure that the City's parking program is financially self-sufficient;
 - 7.1.1 *Set parking fees and fines at levels that cover capital, operating, maintenance and enforcement costs and generate additional revenue to expand the parking program to meet the growing needs of the City*
- 7.2 Offer City-owned public parking at a rate that recognizes the cost of providing parking and the economic value of the parking;
(See Recommendation 7.1.1)
- 7.3 Provide parking discounts when they reflect appropriate incentives for the use of City-owned parking and when the discount is financially feasible;
 - 7.3.1 *Maintain discounts for the disabled (free on-street), low-income workers, part-time workers and shoppers where appropriate*
- 7.4 Structure the financial accounting from parking and parking enforcement with sufficient flexibility to allow maximum effectiveness in the parking program;
 - 7.4.1 *Combine all revenue from City-owned parking and parking enforcement into a single Parking Enterprise Fund.*
 - 7.4.2 *Use the combined Parking Enterprise Fund to support all City parking programs or other programs to accommodate or reduce parking demand*
- 7.5 Maintain all City-owned parking facilities and revenue collection equipment for maximum effectiveness and efficiency;
 - 7.5.1 *Maintain revenue collection equipment for on-street and off-street operations and replace where appropriate*
- 7.6 Provide operational policies and procedures to ensure that the City's parking program is run effectively, efficiently and according to the highest standards of the parking profession
 - 7.6.1 *Update the City's employee manuals for parking-related functions*
 - 7.6.2 *Enhance the financial and operational reporting capabilities to allow optimal financial management of the City's parking assets*
 - 7.6.3 *Replace the City's parking validation system for shoppers with a system that is less susceptible to abuse and requires less administrative support from the City*

8 Promote alternative modes of transportation and walkable communities

8.1 Reduce parking requirements when transit service to an area or opportunities for shared parking may reduce the parking demand

8.1.1 Modify Zoning Code to allow flexible parking ratios so less parking is required where transit availability is best and where mixed-use development allows for shared use of parking

8.2 Encourage use of RT services to and from the Central City

8.2.1 Use City funds to promote the use of RT park-and-ride and transit services as a substitute for parking in the Central City

8.3 Support employer-based programs to reduce commute vehicle trips to the Central City

8.3.1 Use the Parking Fund to support Transportation Management Associations and employers in promoting alternative modes for commute trips to the Central City

9 Provide transportation options to encourage use of existing parking supply

9.1 Use the Parking Fund to provide transportation services that link Central City areas with surplus parking with areas of high parking demand/deficiency.

9.1.1 Consider using shuttle services to link available parking with popular trip destinations to address parking needs in areas without sufficient parking capacity

Summary of Existing Inventory and Occupancy

In addition to the on-street and off-street parking inventory and occupancy information for Focus Areas 1 and 2 previously presented to the stakeholder group, additional surveys have been undertaken in the remaining areas of the Central City. For reference purposes, the following Focus Areas have been defined:

- Focus Area 1 – The Central Business District, generally bounded by the Sacramento River to the west, the Railyards and F Street to the north, 16th or 17th Street to the east, and S Street to the south.
- Focus Area 2 – Central Midtown, generally bounded by 16th or 17th Street to the west, I Street to the north, Alhambra Boulevard to the east, and P Street to the south.
- Focus Area 3 – North Central City, the area north of Focus Areas 1 and 2, and south of the Union Pacific Railroad.
- Focus Area 4 – South Central City, the area south of Focus Areas 1 and 2, and north of Broadway.
- Focus Area 5 – Selected areas in the Richards Boulevard District.

Table 1 presents off-street parking information for each of the five Focus Areas. Focus Areas 1 and 2 exhibit the highest demand, with midday occupancy at 71 percent and 58 percent, respectively. Focus Areas 3 through 5 have occupancy at 50 percent or less.

Table 1 – Existing Midday Off-Street Parking		
Focus Area	Parking Spaces	Percent Occupied
1	43,130	71%
2	11,717	58%
3	5,217	50%
4	10,841	45%
5	6,372	35%
<i>Sum</i>	<i>77,277</i>	<i>60%</i>

Table 2 presents on-street parking information for Focus Areas 1 through 4. Focus Areas 1 and 2 exhibit the highest demand, with midday occupancy at 82 percent and 67 percent, respectively. Focus Areas 3 and 4 have occupancy at 60 percent or less.

Table 2 – Existing Midday On-Street Parking		
Focus Area	Parking Spaces	Percent Occupied
1	5,721	82%
2	4,451	67%
3	4,979	57%
4	7,497	60%
<i>Sum</i>	<i>22,648</i>	<i>67%</i>

Impacts of Future Development on Parking Supply / Demand Relationship

Considerable development is expected to occur in the Central City area of the City of Sacramento through infill projects and redevelopment. Table 3 presents development forecasts for 2-year, 5-year, and beyond 5-year.

Table 3 – Central City Land Use Growth Forecast			
Land Use	2 Year	5 Year	Beyond 5 Year
Office	975,000 sf	1,525,000 sf	8,000,000 sf
Residential	1,925 units	3,375 units	14,000 units
Retail	450,000 sf	1,100,000 sf	2,700,000 sf

In recent decades, growth has been concentrated in office development. In addition to continued growth in the office sector, future growth is expected in residential and restaurant / entertainment / nightlife categories. The impacts of this additional

development on the parking demand relationship is primarily dependent upon the amount of parking provided with each new project.

Office Development

The parking demand associated with office development can be generally satisfied if parking is provided at the current minimum parking requirement of one space per 600 square feet of development. The typical government office project has a parking demand slightly lower than the zoning minimum (about one space per 700 to 800 square feet), while the typical private office project has a parking demand slightly higher than the zoning maximum (about one space per 450 to 500 square feet). With anticipated improved transit services and increases in the cost of automobile travel (fuel and parking costs), it is expected that these parking demand rates will decrease somewhat over time. The current off-street parking surplus in much of the core business district provides a buffer to accommodate demand variations. However, if office employees continue to parking on-street rather than in typically more expensive off-street locations, short-term parking for visitors and business customers will become more difficult to find.

Residential Development

Many new residential units are anticipated in the Central City. Zoning requirements for parking associated with this development is typically 1 to 1.5 off-street spaces per unit, plus limited parking for visitors. As the typical auto ownership is about 1.5 vehicles per household, parking demand is anticipated to exceed the zoning minimum off-street supply. This is especially true as many residents use off-street private garage parking for storage purposes.

In some areas of the City, particularly in the core business district, the excess parking demand could be accommodated in off-street facilities that are under-utilized at night. However, in much of midtown, the additional demand can only be accommodated on-street. This results in increased demand for on-street parking, particularly in the evening hours, when existing residents, new residents, and visitors / business patrons compete for on-street spaces.

Restaurant / Entertainment / Night Life Development

The central city has already experienced evening on-street parking shortages due to development of restaurants in areas without convenient, available off-street parking. Convenient off-street parking is necessary not only to mitigate impacts to residents of the affected areas, but also to ensure the continued economic viability of the business enterprises. Since many of these projects involve re-use of existing structures without sufficient parking, continued development in this business sector provides a significant parking supply challenge.

Case Study

Based upon the existing imbalance between parking supply and demand and resultant conflicts, a case study is being conducted for the area bounded by J Street to the north, Capitol Avenue to the south, 14th Street to the west, and 19th Street to the east. This area has experienced on-street parking shortages in the evenings as residents and restaurant / entertainment venue patrons compete for spaces. Additional re-use / infill development is anticipated in this area. It is difficult for new uses to acquire off-street parking since many existing parcels have very limited or no parking supply.

In addition to the data previously collected in Focus Areas 1 and 2, additional detailed data will be collected. This data will focus on the availability of public off-street parking during the critical evening hours, as well as information concerning off-street parking that is not available to the public.

The policy recommendations of the Parking Master Plan will be applied to the Case Study area to establish candidate strategies to address existing problems and to avoid future problems. Potential strategies include:

- Increased use of available off-street facilities through better information
- Brokering the use of additional off-street facilities for evening / weekend use
- Changes to on-street parking regulations, including time limits and cost
- A shuttle system for patrons
- An employee parking program
- Increased off-street parking supply