

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

DISTRICT 3 – SACRAMENTO AREA OFFICE

VENTURE OAKS – MS 15

P.O. BOX 942874

SACRAMENTO, CA 94274-0001

PHONE (916) 274-0614

FAX (916) 274-0648

TTY (530) 741-4509

*Flex your power!  
Be energy efficient!*

July 7, 2006

06SAC0102

03-SAC-VAR PM VAR

Sacramento Central City Parking Master Plan

Final Report—Draft

Ms. Fran Halbakken  
City of Sacramento  
915 I Street, Room 2000  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Halbakken:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Sacramento Central City Parking Master Plan (Plan). The Plan proposes procedures and strategies for managing on-street and off-street parking supply. Overall, almost 40,000 new parking spaces are anticipated over the planning horizon. Our comments are as follows:

- The amount of new parking spaces planned by the City is an anecdotal indicator of the Central City's higher trip generation rates. As the City studies how best to provide parking for residents, visitors, and employees, Caltrans respectfully submits that the City should study how best to assist in providing adequate Level of Service along the State Highways that ring the Central City. With the minor exception of the I Street Bridge, these highways provide all access across the Sacramento River and American River into Downtown Sacramento and are key components of the Central City circulation system.

If you have any questions about these comments please contact me at (916) 274-0614.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce De Terra". Below the signature, the name "Bruce De Terra" is printed in a smaller font.

*for* BRUCE DE TERRA, Chief  
Office of Transportation Planning—South

**Central City Parking Master Plan  
Draft Final Report and Draft Summary Report Comments Via Email**

**June 22, 2006 – Comment 1:**

Fran,

Thanks for the opportunity to comment again.

Here are comments on the summary report:

2.1.1 If current minimum parking standards are satisfactory, why is, on average, 30% of the parking unused even during peak periods? Perhaps some analysis is warranted here and in the full report on why public employees could have a lower minimum parking standard--why they need less parking than private employees?

page 43 Introduction says the Downtown Partnership is a TMA, which it is not.

page 44 8.2.1 encourages use of RT services and park-and-ride lots. Park-and-ride lots create dead zones around transit stations, encourage automobile use and still require highly polluting cold starts. It would be better to encourage use of buses, bikes and walking to get to outlying transit stops or stations and not specifically endorse using an automobile and park-and-ride lots. Why not just delete "and park-and-ride lots" from this recommendation?

Comments on the final draft report

Outreach

Recommend listing stakeholders in an appendix.

Existing conditions

Recommend including in existing conditions what percentage of land area/building space is devoted to parking.

page 17 Discussion of Convention Center/Memorial Auditorium says 1000 feet is a reasonable walking distance. My opinion differs. I think walking 2,000 feet is reasonable. What's the source for saying 1,000 is reasonable, and not 1,100, 1,200 or some other number? How about 1,300 feet since that's closer to the rule of thumb quarter-mile distance most people are willing to walk to transit?

The analysis of parking meter times and rates, parking garage rates and parking goals all seemed excellent.

Walt Seifert

Executive Director

Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA)

(916) 444-6600

[saba@sacbike.org](mailto:saba@sacbike.org)

[www.sacbike.org](http://www.sacbike.org)

"SABA represents bicyclists. Our aim is more and safer trips by bike."

**June 26, 2006 – Comment 2:**

This is incorrect:

The fee for an RPP permit is \$30 for two years and enforcement is by complaint. Each resident is issued one free Visitor permit.

Marilyn Bryant,  
Executive Director  
Sacramento TMA  
917 7th Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
ph: (916) 441-7074  
fax: (916) 448-4909  
email: Sacramento TMA <sactma@surewest.net  
web site: <http://www.sacramento-tma.org>  
<<http://www.sacramento-tma.org/>>

The Sacramento Transportation Management Association is an independent, membership-funded association, with 16 years experience helping its members' employees find commute alternatives.

**June 29, 2006 – Comment 3:**

Fran,

Thank you for the response. I just want to point out that although Alkali Flats isn't in the Core of Downtown it's heavily impacted by City and County offices. Short term parking is a major problem East from F Street and I didn't want this to get over looked. Suggestions were made that the 2 hour non residential parking be reduced to 1 hour for this reason.

Mansion Flats is impacted by entertainment venues that include, but aren't limited to, Avalon Night Club and The Music Circus. Patrons of these establishments use the limited on street parking spaces due to the fact there isn't any enforce in the late evening. The suggestions were to also reduce the non residential parking hours East from G Street, extend enforcement hours to midnight on weekends and special events.

Additional comments may be added.

Thank you,  
Sean Wright

**July 7, 2006 – Comment 4:**

My comments on the Central City Parking Master Plan are as follows:

1. Page 19 of the Draft Table 3.9:

The high (over 85%) occupancy rate for the Tower Bridge Garage in the spring (9 days) and in the summer (22 days) indicates a need for an additional garage on the south end of Old Sacramento. The Tower Bridge Garage is reaching full capacity often because of

the River Cats games, Joe's Crabshack and The Embassy Suites. A new garage by the Embassy Suites would alleviate some of the pressure on the Tower Bridge Garage.

2. Page 47 of the Draft Table 8.2

It appears that the hourly rates in the garages in Sacramento are higher than in most other cities of a similar size. The rates in Old Sacramento garages is \$3.00 per hour. We should consider the various ramifications regarding lowering the hourly rate. During the Old Sacramento Parking Committee meetings we discussed and analyzed many combinations of reduced rates and free periods. The amount of revenue lost to the City by offering 7 day a week first-hour free parking was enormous and was considered unfeasible.

3. In Old Sacramento we are moving forward with an expanded validation program to encourage visitors to park in the garages. Also we are educating merchants and employees on the DEPP discount program.

4. As discussed in our Committee meetings, an additional entrance to the Old Sacramento garage would increase visitor parking in the garage. When the garage was first built there was an entrance at J Street off 2nd and it was dismantled many years ago. Often during busy times drivers will circle around Old Sacramento looking for an on-street space and do not realize that there are 2 large garages with entrances just outside the district.

Deborah Chausse

**July 7, 2006 – Comment 5:**

Ms. Halbakken: Please note I would like to submit the following comment to the parking master plan. The 2 hour limit for residential parking in my neighborhood (Alkali Flat, spc E st between 8th & 9th) is too long to deter commuters from parking on our streets. They are able to come out on their break and move from one location to another. I can identify on sight at least 10 such people who have been parking on my street for several years.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Randy Owen

June 27, 2006

Fran Halbakken  
Department of Transportation  
City of Sacramento

Re: Central City Parking Master Plan

Dear Ms. Halbakken

I am glad that the City is addressing this issue. The following are my comments. I appreciate the opportunity to make them.

The nine goals identified in the study are appropriate and provide a helpful framework for developing objectives and the actions that can be taken to meet them. However, I think we need a 10<sup>th</sup> goal that speaks to developing a parking policy that significantly reduces the number of single occupancy vehicle trips into and out of the Central City and significantly reduces the number of all automobile trips within the Central City. The Master Plan makes reference to projections that suggest that the percent of vehicle trips to and within the Central City will be reduced from 75% to 68% by 2025. Given the projected growth of the region and the number of automobiles that growth implies (not to mention air pollution, green house gases and the lack of space to either park or drive all these vehicles), that percent reduction isn't nearly enough and parking policies need to actively promote a much greater reduction. As I see it, there are two ways to do this:

- 1) Make it extremely expensive for single occupancy vehicle daytime commuters to park anywhere in the Central City. This can be done by charging such commuters very high parking rates (the Master Plan talks about higher rates for commuters) and by creating a scarcity of parking places for them (e.g. reduce the number of parking spaces that must be built for them and make it virtually impossible for them to use any on street parking anywhere in the Central City (this includes along parts of R Street where commuters currently park free and then take light rail the rest of the way downtown). Note: swing shift and evening commuters are a different issue because of the lack of transit and night time safety issues, although every effort should be made to encourage these commuters to car pool
- 2) Make it extremely easy and cheap (even free) for anyone to get anywhere in the Central City using a combination of mini busses, light rail, trolleys, shared cabs, dial a ride (a la Para Transit) and make these alternative modes available in the evening as well as during the day so that people who come to the Central City to eat, shop or visit the various entertainment venues can leave their car in a public or private parking structure or lot and get wherever they need to go without it and people who live in the Central City can just leave their car at home. (This is an expanded version of the shuttle system described in Goal 9 of the Master Plan.) Car sharing programs and transit passes should be part of all new developments over a certain size. Parking fees should be used to subsidize all of this. I like the idea of a transit surcharge at all City parking structures and lots (7.4.3) and would like to see the same surcharge at private facilities if there is a legal way to do it. In lieu fees for developers also make sense. However my concern with these is to avoid a situation where developers have paid such fees and gotten permits before such a transit system is in place and we have an even worse parking crisis in the Central City than we do now.

Dividing parkers into three groups (Goal 3), commuters, residents and people coming to the Central City to shop, eat and be entertained, and establishing priorities for each is very helpful. It provides a framework for making parking more expensive for commuters and less expensive (hence more inviting) for people coming to the Central City to spend money (3.3.2) I have some additional comments with regard to residents:

- 1) It is critically important to get as many people as possible out of their cars and into alternative transportation. It is easy to do many things in the Central City without a car. Unfortunately, we

still need cars in this society (it is hard to go most places outside the Central City without a car, it isn't safe to go most places at night without a car, transit isn't even adequate in the Central City in the evening). The result is that Central City residents have cars just like everyone else and must have some place to store them when they are not using them. That means there must be adequate parking both in existing neighborhoods and in new developments.

2. The Residential Permit Parking Program is critical to existing neighborhoods. Cars were much less important when these historic neighborhoods were built and, hence, many buildings don't have off street parking and residents have no choice but to park on the street. I was glad to see the importance of RPP acknowledged in the Master Plan and to see Goal 4 about modifying RPP to deal with the interface between residential/retail. The current interface isn't working and many neighborhoods, including mine, are feeling the impact to the point that I'm really afraid for their healthy survival. If our neighborhoods are to be protected, we need one hour (not two hour) parking limits and we need enforcement extended to evening and weekend hours (8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday). Neighborhoods that are impacted now need this protection now and making the necessary changes needs to be treated as a priority. The recommendation to reinstate parking requirements for all C-3 and Arts and Entertainment districts will help keep parking available for residents, particularly if businesses publicize where their parking is and encourage patrons to use it. Updating valet parking requirements (3.4.3) will also help if these requirements make clear that valet parking is not to use on street parking spaces in RPP areas. I oppose the proposal (4.3.1) to sell "limited numbers" of parking passes in RPP areas to commuters. RPP areas should be primarily for residents along with those short term parkers who can find spaces. I fear that too many passes will be sold and that, once they are sold, residents will get stuck with consequences that can't be fixed easily or quickly. I'm also opposed to anything that makes single occupancy vehicle commuting easier and this proposal does that.

3. With regard to new residential developments, the Master Plan calls for one parking space per unit and an additional .5 spaces for units over 2,000 sq. ft. (2.1.2). I don't think this is adequate. (Again, remember, people need to store their cars where they live even if they use transit for many of their activities.) I think there should be a minimum of one parking space per bedroom to reflect the reality that residential units with more than one adult are likely to have more than one car. I support not giving RPP permits to residents of new developments. (2.1.4) However, I do think there should be some flexibility about this for very small infill projects (three units or less). Car sharing programs and free or low cost transit passes need to be part of all larger developments. It makes sense to have shared parking in mixed use (housing/commercial) projects as long as some spaces are available for residents to use during the day and as long as there are enough parking spaces to have one space per bedroom in the evening and on weekends. An additional concern I have is the way that parking spaces are handled in new rental developments. Developers provide the parking spaces currently required. However, residents can only use these spaces by paying an additional charge. It appears that many residents save money by not renting the parking spaces. The result is that they end up parking on the street taking up spaces desperately needed by residents of older buildings who have no off street parking and little or no option to purchase any even if they want to. I think that rental developers need to be conditioned to make the required parking spaces part of the rental cost, not an option to be paid for separately.

One of the strengths of the Master Plan is that it tries to maximize the use of all existing parking both on street and off. Objective 6.2, speaks to a variety of ways to make people aware of parking locations and is critical to maximizing use. Getting a shuttle system in place quickly is also critical to maximizing use. With regard to maximizing on street parking, I support putting angled parking on every block possible (2.5.3). It not only increases the number of on street parking spaces, but also slows traffic making streets safer. I would also like to see a prohibition on new driveway curb cuts for existing residences. Such curb cuts result in loss of on street parking spaces and, often, in ugly front yards full of cement. I have no problem with metering in some residential areas as long as an RPP program is also in place for residents. With regard to maximizing off street parking, I think that all new privately owned commercial parking structures should have a condition mandating joint city/private management. The Sutter project is building

a parking structure in my neighborhood and I certainly want to see such an agreement for that structure. It would be very helpful if the city could also negotiate such agreements with the owners of existing private parking structures. The city brokering agreements between business owners and owners of private parking structures (2.2.1) is also a good idea..

The Master Plan makes no mention of two fairly obvious sources of additional parking. The first of these is the unutilized and under utilized parking space under the Capitol City and WX Freeways. The city should explore building two level parking structures (like the one Sutter hospital built adjacent to its campus) there. Development of such parking structures combined with shuttle service has the potential to significantly expand parking options while keeping a lot of traffic off Central City streets. The second of these is the railroad right of way that runs through the Central City between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets. Some of it is already used for parking but much of it is vacant, overgrown, littered with trash and very unsightly. Landscaped well lit parking in these vacant areas would not only increase Central City parking capacity, but would be a big visual improvement over what is there now.

Creation of new parking structures and lots in the Central City is a difficult issue and should be kept to a minimum because structures and lots detract from the streetscape and take up space that could be used for other things. Obviously new developments have to provide new parking and developers need to pay for constructing this parking. Wherever possible, parking should be part of a larger commercial, residential or mixed use structure and should be hidden from view. I strongly support the city policy to prohibit the addition of new stand alone parking structures that are not associated with specific new developments (5.2.1). Stand alone parking structures associated with projects should be well designed (the Music Circus parking lot is an example of good design except for the alley side of it) and have ground floor commercial. Valet parking, tandem parking and car lifts all make sense as ways to maximize parking space as does shared use parking. Security is critical and that includes secure ways of closing off the structure during any hours that it is not in operation. Unless this is done, there will soon be problems with people hanging out and camping.

With regard to surface parking lots, some are better than others, but they are a visual blight. The city seems to be lax about enforcing standards and this needs to change. I am very concerned about the interim use of vacant lots as parking lots (2.3.1) because of the blight factor. Such lots should never be allowed in residential areas. (Unfortunately we have some now, I Street and N Street in Midtown being prime examples and we need a plan to get rid of them and replace them with infill housing. They destroy the streetscape). If vacant lots are to be used as parking lots, then there needs to be a well publicized public hearing process and a clear time limit which will not be extended. Parking lots pay well and require little maintenance. We have all too many problem owners, generally absentee, who would like nothing better than to turn their vacant lots into cash cow parking lots and this would be very, very destructive for the Central City.

One final comment, I like the Master Plan's awareness of the need to track parking utilization . Many businesses, particularly restaurants and bars, don't have enough parking space to meet requirements so they arrange to lease space from others. By their very nature, such situations are temporary and can change and, when they do, they can cause havoc. It is important to make sure that businesses continue to have the required amount of parking over time. The city has had a history of issuing parking variances while failing to keep track of cumulative impacts or to recognize situations where more than one business has made arrangements to use the same finite number of parking spaces. This has to stop.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Karen Jacques  
threegables@macnexus.org

Midtown Business Association  
1716 L Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916 442-1500  
[midtownsacto@sbcglobal.net](mailto:midtownsacto@sbcglobal.net)

June 29, 2006

Fran Halbakken  
City of Sacramento  
Department of Transportation  
915 I Street, Room 2000  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Fran,

Thank you for giving the Midtown Business Association a chance to review and respond to the Central City Parking Master Plan (CCPMP). As you know, Midtown (the Central City group of neighborhoods bounded by 16<sup>th</sup> Street on the west, C Street on the north, Alhambra on the east, and W Street on the south) is a well-established mixed-use community with vibrant retail, restaurant, and entertainment districts intermixed with offices, hospitals, churches, schools, parks and homes. We value and promote our strong residential base and at the same time we support the unique businesses and entertainment uses which give the area its character and form its tax base. The growth and improvement of our mixed-use neighborhoods also create challenges as we try to balance the needs of the different constituencies and provide services to support an attractive, safe and accessible neighborhood in which to live, work and visit.

The challenge in figuring out an appropriate and feasible parking plan for a mixed-use district such as Midtown is to provide safe, accessible parking for residents near to their homes, safe and affordable parking for employees, many of whom work in retail or restaurant establishments late into the evening, and easy-to-find short-term spaces for the customers and visitors to the area. We suggest that the City use the following overarching considerations when evaluating any policy, implementation or regulatory changes:

1. **Maintain flexibility to encourage development and infill projects.** Policies and regulatory changes that may work in many situations may also prove to be disincentives for new infill development. We need enough flexibility within the Master Plan to accommodate difficult sites or other development challenges. This is particularly true for minimum and maximum parking ratios for new mixed-use buildings which may be able to use their own spaces, as well as nearby off-site spaces, in rotation as the users change throughout the day and night.
2. **Support policies to provide safe, efficient parking for employees and customers in commercial corridors.** Parking priorities may need to be tailored to specific sub-districts. In heavily residential districts, residents may have higher priority, but in our commercial areas, the economic health of the neighborhood

- depends on safe, convenient parking. In these areas, higher priority may be given to customers and employees. This is particularly true in areas with high concentrations of restaurants and nightclubs, where most patrons will need parking options that allow them to park for two to three hours without needing to “feed the meter.”
3. **Do not expand Residential Permit Parking areas or create stricter on-street parking regulations without considering the “ripple effect” on nearby businesses, restaurants and retail.** In other words, a policy may sound good in theory, but may cause unexpected repercussions in implementation. For example, expanding Residential Permit Parking (RPP) areas or increasing enforcement hours and decreasing time limits on on-street parking where there is significant business, restaurant and retail presence, may appear to benefit residents in mixed-use neighborhoods by making it difficult for employees to use on-street parking. However, residents in adjacent, less commercial streets may end up suffering, as employees and patrons from dense commercial corridors are forced further into residential neighborhoods to find long-term parking. And businesses will suffer as their patrons are not able to find convenient parking spots.
  4. **Provide reasonable long-term alternatives when making major changes.** If more on-street spaces are time-limited, more residential permit areas are created or surface lots are restricted, we must provide safe, walkable and affordable parking for employees, patrons and visitors, particularly at night, when transit options are fewer and structured garages may be closed or feel threatening to an individual parker. A four block walk to parking during the noon hour is very different than the same walk in the dark hours of the night.
  5. **Consider creating policies, zoning and implementation strategies specifically tailored to support Midtown mixed-use districts with dense commercial corridors, much like downtown’s Arts & Entertainment District.** There should be equality of treatment for Midtown’s commercial corridors and the A & E District, as they face many of the same challenges and provide much of the economic engine for the Central City. These measures would recognize and attempt to resolve the inherent challenges in a busy mixed-use district, such as increased competition for limited on-street parking supply; higher cost of infill structures; limited land for additional lots or structures; concerns for historic buildings, provision of incentives for new business and investment, etc.
  6. **Use innovative new technology in commercial districts to improve supply and convenience.** The CCPMP should serve not only as a mitigation program for parking challenges, but should set standards for better parking practices and innovative improvements. Prioritize major commercial streets for upgrades to on-street technology, such as “meters” that accept credit cards, Parcxmart interoperable parking systems which allow users to load up to \$100 on a Smart Card that they can then use to pay for on-street spaces and parking lots at a discounted rate. The ability to provide ease and flexibility through the use of new smarter parking “meters” or machines will go a long way to encouraging visitors and patrons to shop, dine and entertain themselves in the Central City, rather than staying in the suburbs.

7. **Do not expand the Parking Manager's authority over rates, time limits, etc. until the CCPMP has gone through a test period; review and evaluate pilot implementation strategies before adopting them permanently.** We recommend a high degree of Council oversight and public involvement in designing new implementation measures based on the broad policies contained in the CCPMP. The Midtown Business Association strongly opposes any measures that expand the Parking Manager's authority over setting of rates, time limits and hours of enforcement in the short-term after the Master Plan has been adopted. In the next few years, until case studies have been carried out, pilot implementation measures have been evaluated and unexpected repercussions have been resolved, control over major changes in our parking regulations, supply and enforcement must remain squarely with City Council and must require public input beyond the City's normal written notification procedures for the immediate neighborhood. After this test period, the question of expanding the Parking Manager's authority may be re-considered.

Thank you again for the time and thought that City staff has put into developing these policies; we hope to work closely with you in the implementation phase to craft innovative and efficient solutions to our parking issues.

Yours truly,

Connie Miottel  
Executive Director

## **LOFTWORKS POSITION ON NEW DRAFT PARKING POLICIES:**

### **Section 1.2.1**

The amount of the “in lieu of parking” fee should not jeopardize the feasibility of new projects. The City should offer financing for this amount over time. This should be a “one-time” fee applicable towards parking improvements in the impacted neighborhood.

### **Section 1.2.2**

This should allow for a significant reduction (30% to 50%) in minimum required parking due to mixed-use, shared parking & valet. Valet parking alone can increase parking capacity by 30%. Transit, mixed-use and shared use strategies have the potential to reduce parking demand by much more than the 10% suggested in draft policy.

### **Section 1.3**

Senior city parking staff needs flexibility and discretion to tailor parking policy as needed. Conditions vary block to block – staff needs flexibility to respond appropriately to these changing conditions.

For example, staff needs to be able to distinguish between (a) parking lots that support developments that meet City goals, and (b) parking lots that are being held back from development because they are too valuable as surface parking lots.

Staff also needs flexibility to make distinctions between public and private parking lots.

### **Section 2.1.2**

No increased parking requirements on any new projects in the central city and midtown. The goal is to reduce the number of cars here rather than increase this number. Increased parking requirements also jeopardize the financial feasibility of new projects.

### **Section 2.1.4**

This policy discriminates against residents in new projects by not giving them the same on-street parking rights which residents of existing projects have. Stated City policy is that on-street parking belongs to everyone.

### **Section 2.3.1**

Include language from May 9, 2006 Staff Report that says “Interim surface parking lot policy...applies to surface parking lots that were in continuous operation by January 1, 2006. All other lots are defined as new surface parking lots...No new surface parking lots will be allowed in Merged Downtown Redevelopment Project Area.”

July 7, 2006

Ms. Fran Halbakken, Plans and Policy Manager  
Department of Transportation  
City of Sacramento  
915 I Street, Room 2000  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Halbakken:

I am providing comments on the Central City Parking Master Plan Draft Final Report on behalf of the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (District). These comments follow up on comments made in a letter sent by Art Smith on October 19, 2005. Mr. Smith and Ms. Jeane Borkehagen have represented the District in various workshops regarding the master plan since they began in February 2005.

As was stated in the District's earlier comment letter, the Sacramento region is a serious non-attainment area for ozone; over 70% of the precursors of ozone are generated from mobile sources. Consequently, if vehicle trips and miles traveled can be reduced, air quality improvement will result. The parking master plan can serve as an important tool for the implementation of strategies to reduce vehicle trips and encourage reaching the central city by alternate modes. Despite the changes made to the draft final report, in its current form the parking master plan fails to accomplish this goal.

Many of the new projects planned for the central city are based on smart growth principles that can potentially reduce vehicle trips and improve air quality. The draft final report of the master plan does not adequately evaluate the potential to mitigate the need for new parking facilities with better transit service and pedestrian/bicycle access to the central city. Rather, the master plan assumes significant increases in vehicle trips and proposes new parking structures to accommodate that growth. Goal 5 of the master plan seeks to "reduce the negative impact of parking" yet does not acknowledge the negative impact parking can have on air quality because of induced demand and unnecessary driving as individuals search for a parking place. Goal 8 of the master plan seeks to improve walkability in the central core, but none of the following objectives specifically discuss walkability or strategies for ensuring that parking facilities do not negatively affect pedestrians.

The following are additional key points discussed by the air district in the previous letter that were not adequately addressed in the draft final report:

- In light of the new development projects envisioned for the Central City, the prime element of the master plan needs to focus on alternate commutes and the means to reduce parking demand.
- Added focus on walkable communities needs to be included in the plan.

- The master plan process needs additional study on parking maximums vs. parking minimums for office development and residential development. The concept behind residential units in the Central City is to promote living near the workplace, shopping and entertainment so that vehicle trips can be reduced or eliminated. With proper planning and incentives, that goal can be realized.
- The issue of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes from Sunrise Boulevard to downtown is unresolved. Because of the possibility of an HOV significantly increasing the number of trips in the Central City, some assessment of the impacts on parking needs to be included in the parking master plan process.
- The plan needs to include some discussion on carpools, vanpools and potential carshare options where the Sacramento TMA can be a key for providing leadership.
- The Master Plan lacks for guidance on real-time communications with potential users of parking services. Specifically, it lacks for an adequate discussion of intelligent transportation systems (ITS) such as message signs that can be used to keep users of parking facilities informed on a real-time basis. At any given time, drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians in the downtown area are not easily directed to existing parking structures and other amenities. There are no provisions for an ITS that can direct vehicle and bicycle commuters to available spaces. Lacking this service, commuters in the Central City will continue to be required to take extra time and drive additional miles searching for available parking. The unnecessary vehicle miles traveled will contribute to existing air quality problems rather than serving as a means to improve them.
- The abundance of free parking and subsidized parking by government agencies and local employers in the Central City remains an issue of concern to the district. The measures proposed in the parking plan to address this issue are not adequate.

While the plan does address the need for bicycle parking and facilities, and adopts several of the recommendations made by the district and others during the review process, the parking master plan still represents a "business as usual" mentality. Given the degree of growth planned for the central city area, it is vital that the parking master plan encourages the use of transit and other alternative modes of transit to the greatest extent possible.

If you need to contact me regarding District comments, please call 874-2694 or send email to [jhurley@airquality.org](mailto:jhurley@airquality.org).

Sincerely,

Joseph Hurley  
Assistant Air Quality Planner Analyst

CC: Larry Robinson, SMAQMD

By Email

July 6, 2006

Fran Halbakken  
Department of Transportation  
City of Sacramento  
915 I Street, Room 2000  
Sacramento CA 95814.

Dear Ms. Halbakken:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the “Draft Final Report – Sacramento Central City Parking Master Plan.” My general interest is in the alternative modes of transportation element of the plan; I’ll limit my comments to that issue area.

My specific comments regarding that goal, objectives and policy recommendations are as follows:

**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

**Comment:**

**While I understand the motivation behind the 8.1 objective and related policy recommendations, I believe the objective lacks focus and is confusing. Is it about reducing parking requirements, increasing transit or shared parking or decreasing parking demand? I’m especially concerned as the objective itself has little to do with the promotion of alternative modes of transportation and walkable communities.**

**How exactly does the objective support the goal? Are we looking to support certain things like increases in transit service or opportunities for shared parking? (What exactly is an “opportunity for shared parking”?) Or are we looking for certain measurables like increased transit ridership or decreased automobile use in the central city? I would argue that bicycle parking should be considered as an important item to support in the effort to decrease automobile parking demand.**

**For example, as written, the objective could be re-written:**

**Reduce parking demand through support of transit services or opportunities for shared parking – or – Reduce parking demand through support of alternative mode programs.**

*8.1.1 Adjust parking requirements downward over time as transit service and rider ship increase and there is a demonstrated reduction in the rate of automobile use in the Central City*

**Comment:** I'm not sure this policy recommendation fits in the alternative mode of transportation section. This policy recommendation is more appropriately addressed in Policy Recommendation 1.1.1. as a consideration for adjusting a project's requirements vs. an overall adjustment of parking requirements.

**If it stays here, the criteria for the adjustment need definition. The timeframe and rate of increase in transit service or ridership and the rate of decrease in auto use need to be defined. Also, what kind of auto use are we talking about? Commute trips? As more people live downtown – there's a possibility that overall auto use could go up.**

*8.1.2 Allow flexibility for reduction of the minimum parking requirements by up to 10% when the developer guarantees adequate and sustainable financial support of alternative mode programs to achieve the parking demand reduction requested (in addition to Transportation Management Plan requirements).*

**Comment:** For consistency should reference Policy Recommendation 1.2.2.

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

*8.2.1 Seek funds to promote the use of Regional Transit's services and park-and-ride lots as a substitute for parking in the Central City*

**Comment:** I would expand the promotion beyond "park-and-ride lots" for automobiles to include bicycle parking. My experience is that RT's light rail stations have less than adequate secure bicycle parking. This should also include promotion/support of planning and development around RT stations that encourages bicycle and foot traffic. In addition, I believe safety and security on light rail and busses (and along heavily traveled foot corridors in the Central City) are important factors for getting people out of their cars – don't overlook it!

*8.2.2 Work with Regional Transit on pilot program for transit passes for residents and an expanded pass program for employees*

**Comment:** Is this only for the Central City?

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

*8.3.3 Seek funds for a retrofit bicycle parking program to provide rebates to businesses for installation of bicycle parking*

**Comment: Funds for this rebate should come from the parking program itself. It should be a priority.**

*8.3.4 Revise Zoning Ordinance to require that all new developments provide bicycle parking including short-term parking for visitors*

**Comment: In addition, the ordinance should define the type and placement of the bicycle parking. “MAKE PARKING SAFE, SECURE, ATTRACTIVE AND CONVENIENT” is a goal for automobile parking – the ordinance should ask for the same for bicycles. In many instances, the equipment is not adequate and placement is not conducive to use.**

*8.3.7 Provide on-street bicycle parking where on-street vehicle parking is provided (Initial focus on streets with diagonal parking)*

**Comment: I am very supportive of this policy recommendation.**

I also noticed that taxi service was not addressed in the plan; unless they're considered transit services which I always assume is public transit. I believe that they are and will play an important role as an alternative mode of transportation in the Central City. The City has an important role to play in how the service will be provided and their fare system – which ultimately will affect how much we use their services.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft.

With best regards,

Tad Bell  
1131 Castro Way  
Sacramento, California 95818  
916.716.2317 cell



## Regional Transit

**Sacramento Regional  
Transit District**  
A Public Transit Agency  
and Equal Opportunity Employer

**Mailing Address:**  
P.O. Box 2110  
Sacramento, CA 95812-2110

**Administrative Office:**  
1400 29th Street  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
(916) 321-2800  
(29th St. Light Rail Station/  
Bus 36,38,50,67,68)

**Light Rail Office:**  
2700 Academy Way  
Sacramento, CA 95815  
(916) 648-8400

Public Transit Since 1973

[www.sacrt.com](http://www.sacrt.com)

**RECEIVED**

JUL 11 2006

**Department of Transportation  
Office of the Director**

July 5, 2006

Fran Halbakken, Manager – Planning & Policy  
Department of Transportation  
City of Sacramento  
915 I Street, Room 2000  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Halbakken:

Subject: Sacramento Central Parking Master Plan – Draft Final Report

Dear Ms. Halbakken:

At the Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT), we share the City's goal of achieving a diverse, economically vibrant and livable Central City area; and genuinely respect the challenges the City faces in balancing the needs of many interests and stakeholders when it comes to the sensitive issue of parking supply and management. The City's initiative to take a comprehensive look at parking supply and management in the Central City area is a much needed part of an inclusive look at overall circulation and mobility within the downtown. On behalf of RT, I want to thank you for your personal attention and the work of City staff in discussing this effort with RT staff over the past several months.

Particularly in view of the extent of projected regional growth, as exemplified by the number of planned in-fill and redevelopment projects in this area, we agree that it is critical to develop a policy framework – a blueprint – for parking management in the Central City area. And, we are supportive of the concept that some degree of flexibility is needed to allow variations in parking requirements to be tailored to specific land use types and locations. At the same time, we believe that this is only one part of the overall downtown mobility picture. The Parking Master Plan should not be done in isolation. A more comprehensive study of overall downtown/midtown circulation – a CBD Mobility Plan – is also needed.

Today, approximately 20% of the total number of commuters entering downtown uses transit. Under the Preferred Blueprint Scenario, that percentage is projected to double. From the District's vantage point, the City's study goal of *ensuring parking supply and rates that support transit, other alternative modes, and air quality* is of paramount importance. We

Fran Halbakken

- 2 -

July 5, 2006

also very much agree with the study's recognition that *"parking supply, price and restrictions are important determinants of how people choose to travel."* With that in mind, as the City moves forward, it is critical not to lose sight of its long-range goal of reducing reliance on the automobile in the Central City. In order for that to occur will take a concerted plan of action to ensure that short-term decisions are consistent with long-term strategies and plans.

At RT, we strongly believe that part of the reason for the current 20% transit utilization by downtown commuters is attributable to strong City policy direction to reduce parking in order to encourage the use of alternatives to the single occupant vehicle. This occurred about the same time that light rail service was introduced in the downtown. At that time, the City adopted new, more restrictive parking standards for the Central Business District that intentionally tightened the parking supply. Additionally, the City began to require Transportation Management Plans of employers in order to assist in promoting the use of alternative transportation options. While more remains to be done, these policies seem to have been effective. With this documented local experience, we recommend that City officials examine any new parking policy recommendations within the context of the CBD transit usage goals identified in the Blueprint, previous policy direction and experience.

In the final analysis, the Central City Parking Master Plan, if adopted as proposed, will increase the amount of parking downtown. While we are supportive of providing for flexibility and some increased parking in the short-term, we do not support "across-the-board" easing of the maximum parking limitations, and requiring parking for uses (i.e., retail and the first 20,000 square feet of office space) not required today. Although the proposed Plan calls for adjustment of parking requirements downward over time – as transit service and ridership increase (and there is a demonstrated reduction in the rate of automobile use in the City) – no definitive timeframe or concrete Plan of Action is proposed to ensure that short-term excess parking gives way for increased transit service in the future. This is problematic.

RT looks forward to continuing work with the City in this important area. In addition to working with the District on a pilot program to provide transit passes for residents and employees in the Central City, other recommended ways to support increased transit utilization and mitigate the impact of a short-term increase in the CBD parking supply include:

- Development of a robust downtown transit circulation system, such as a future downtown streetcar system. Utilization of parking revenue to support transit, biking, pedestrian and other alternate modes is strongly recommended as part of any future plan.
- Strategies to provide preferential parking for car sharing at employment and residential locations within the Central City. One of the benefits of car sharing is reduced parking.

Fran Halbakken

- 3 -

July 5, 2006

- Examination of a peripheral parking strategy coupled with a supportive transit/biking/pedestrian plan.
- Implementation of preferential transit applications in the Central City to improve the speed and reliability of transit service, reduce congestion, and improve air quality, i.e., bus lanes, traffic signal priority and queue jumps for transit vehicles.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me at 321-2989; or RT's Director of Planning, Taiwo Jaiyeoba, at 556-0507.

Sincerely,



Beverly A. Scott, Ph.D.  
General Manager/CEO

c: RT Board of Directors (City of Sacramento)  
Mike Wiley, Deputy General Manager, RT  
Taiwo Jaiyeoba, Planning Director, RT  
Fred Arnold, Director of Real Estate, RT



909 12th Street, Suite 100 • Sacramento, CA • 95814 • (916) 420-4829

July 7, 2006

Mayor Heather Fargo and Councilmembers  
City of Sacramento, City Hall  
915 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: ECOS Comments on Final Draft Central City Parking Master Plan

Dear Mayor Fargo and Councilmembers:

ECOS is troubled by many of the policy recommendations in the final draft Central City Parking Master Plan (Plan). In its current form, the Plan will do little if anything to facilitate a shift away from single-passenger driving into and around downtown. Perhaps even more troubling, the Plan recommends strategies that risk locking us into an outmoded and anti-urban pattern of low-density, suburban-character development. The Plan employs confusing and internally inconsistent analyses of past parking policies and future goals and thus fails to provide any mechanisms for actually creating a downtown Sacramento that minimizes dependence on cars.

The economic, social and environmental health of a community can only be achieved if all residents have access to essential services. The most successful and vibrant downtowns in the world are defined by their lack of support for and lack of orientation towards the car. The policies recommended in the Final Draft Plan, however, undercut the City's professed goals of "economic development, livable neighborhoods, achieving sustainability and improving public safety."<sup>1</sup> These laudable goals can not be achieved if we continue to facilitate use of single-passenger vehicles in downtown Sacramento.

The City Council gave clear direction when they added Goals 8 and 9 ("Promote alternative modes of transportation and walkable communities," and "Provide transportation options to encourage use of existing parking supply").<sup>2</sup> Yet, on numerous occasions, policy recommendations in the Plan contradict City goals of walkability, bikeability, and transit access and use. There are three core problems with this Plan. The first problem is that the Plan ignores its own numbers to justify a claim that there is a parking shortage. The second problem is that a number of policies are suggested as appropriate for reducing car dependency when in fact these policies will encourage increased car use in the central city. The third problem is an underlying adherence to car-oriented planning.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Sacramento Central City Parking Master Plan: Draft Final Report*, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Sacramento Central City Parking Master Plan: Draft Final Report*, p. 23.

Given the strong support throughout the community for a more lively and accessible downtown, what the City of Sacramento needs is a Plan that demonstrates an across-the-board progression from car-oriented to transit and pedestrian-oriented design. The only means of securing our shared vision for a livable Sacramento is a paradigm shift in our policies and culture toward widespread commuter walking, biking, and transit use.

### **Current Parking Supply Is Adequate**

In its very first paragraph, the Plan claims that the current parking supply is inadequate. Data throughout the Plan, however, clearly and indisputably show that there is no parking shortage in the central city. Studies compared the percentage of available spots filled in several focus areas, at different times of day and during different months. Under absolutely no circumstances did city parking, on-street or off, reach maximum capacity. Furthermore, without any justification, the Plan's authors establish the unreasonably low figure of 85% as the threshold for available parking in a particular area to be considered "effectively full." It appears that the data were presented in a manipulative manner in order to strengthen a dangerous claim that the city of Sacramento is suffering from a lack of adequate parking. There is no parking shortage in Sacramento and the City must acknowledge this if it is to implement a parking plan that in any way contributes to its goals for walkability, bikeability, and transit use.

### **Policy Recommendations Are Internally Inconsistent and Contradictory**

The second goal in the current Plan, "Supply parking to meet need," perfectly encapsulates the out-of-date supply-oriented approach that the City is trying to move away from and sets the stage for parking and land use policies that will undermine our chances for developing a successful, vibrant downtown. Policies aimed at simply meeting estimated increases in parking demand will induce greater increases in parking demand rather than address or manage such demand in any constructive way. The key to increasing accessibility to downtown Sacramento for everybody in our City and region is to minimize demand for and land dedicated to parking. Implementing supply-oriented policies will only exacerbate car-dependency, discourage walking, and result in the paving over of vast areas of valuable land to store cars rather than support commerce and other public uses that are in the long-term interest of Sacramento.

### **Shifting from Car-Oriented To Transit, Bike and Pedestrian-Oriented Planning**

ECOS understands that limiting parking supply is not itself a solution to car dependency. Concurrent with decreasing supply, the City must implement a range of parking demand reduction strategies and aggressively support transit, biking and walking options. Demand reduction is achieved by limiting availability, increasing the actual cost of parking and establishing more restrictive parking maximums for new developments. Provision of transit and other modes of transportation are ensured by establishing specific performance standards and implementation measures within the Parking Master Plan. Measures could include: parking fees, requiring that employers subsidize transit passes for all employees, and looking at the potential for a focused ballot initiative for transit operations and maintenance as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

## **Mandatory Transit Funding for New Developments**

The Plan notes that State government offices in Sacramento have a lower parking demand than private offices. Rather than establishing a minimum parking requirement and/or adjusting the maximum requirement to accommodate private sector employees, we should follow and build on the example set by State offices in the city. State offices have been somewhat successful in addressing parking issues because they have looked at both the supply and demand sides of the equation — limiting parking supply while also addressing parking demand by requiring transit subsidies, creating incentives for carpooling, and facilitating other ways of getting to work. Transit subsidies have been successfully implemented by the University of California and other State entities and are a proven and effective means of funding essential transit services. If every employer is required to pay their share for transit access, Sacramento Regional Transit (RT) will have more funds to invest in operation and maintenance of transit facilities that serve all workers.

An additional benefit of an employee transit pass system is an inbuilt means of tracking success in parking management. How frequently employees use their transit passes can be easily measured to track how commuter behavior is changing, and whether performance standards are being met. The City should link these efforts to a Transit Master Plan, whereby overall transit system ridership could be systematically measured. A Transit Master Plan would incorporate all opportunities for coordinating with RT and funding transit operations and maintenance.

## **Specific Recommendations**

If the City wishes to realize its vision of an exciting, safe and successful downtown, then it must wholly embrace a change in culture from auto-oriented to transit and pedestrian-oriented planning. The framework for building a livable Sacramento is limit supply, decrease demand, and support alternate modes of transportation. Below are a few detailed comments on the Final Draft Parking Master Plan.

| <b>Policy Recommendation</b>   | <b>ECOS Comment</b>   |
|--|---|
| 8. Promote alternative modes of transportation and walkable communities.<br><br>9. Provide transportation options to encourage use of existing parking supply. | Decreasing demand for parking should be the highest priority. Goals 8 and 9 should be 1st and 2nd on list of goals and policy recommendations and all other policy recommendations should be weighed against them.<br><br>Develop a comprehensive circulation plan for the downtown and central city. Rather than merely promoting alternate modes of transportation, include policies which will result in measurable goals for a 25% to 50% increase in peak hour commuters coming into the central city by |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>alternative modes, thereby decreasing commuters coming in by single occupancy vehicles.</p> <p>Fund alternative transportation modes to improve the frequency and quality of transit service and fund bicycle and pedestrian facilities.</p> <p>Transit passes mandatory for approval of new development. Employers to provide annually for all employees and developers and associations provide for all residents. Plan to expand to include present employees and residents.</p> |
| <p>1.1.1 Establish flexible parking ranges for all types of development to allow developers flexibility to match parking with the needs of the specific project and develop a process to allow approval of adjustments to the minimum and maximum parking requirements when a proposed development project is consistent with the City's economic development goals.</p>  | <p>This policy recommendation undercuts goals 8 and 9, opening the door to increases in parking minimums and maximums. The City should reduce demand for parking by enforcing strict policies for provision of alternate modes of transportation and transportation demand reduction strategies.</p>   |
| <p>1.2.1 Adopt City policy and guidelines to allow a developer to pay an "in-lieu-of-parking" fee for development of less than the minimum required parking.</p>  | <p>Only if "in-lieu-of-parking" fees are less than cost of construction of parking will developers have incentive to reduce parking. Fees can then be directed towards alternative modes of transportation: transit-subsidization, car-pool planning, locker rooms for bikers.</p>   |
| <p>1.2.2 Allow flexibility for reduction in the minimum required parking by as much as 10% when a parking-demand reduction can be demonstrated because of factors such as the development is adequately served by transit, mixed-use development allows for shared use of parking, the lease costs for parking for tenants is clearly separated from the lease cost for floor space, or there are no reserved spaces. The reduction is to be allowed only when the developer can demonstrate that the reduction in parking demand can be sustained at least 10 years.</p> | <p>Developers are unlikely to invest in providing alternatives if they are not required to do so. Again, developers should be given mandatory standards for provision of alternative modes of transportation, which can be tied in to a City Transit Master Plan, and to pedestrian and bicycle plans.</p> <p>The 10% cap is in contradiction with second half of policy recommendation 2.1.5 (cited below).</p>   |
| <p>1.2.3 Adopt new guidelines and standards to recognize creative methods to increase</p>   | <p>Creativity with storage of cars in new parking developments will not reduce the</p>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| the efficiency of space used for parking including tandem, car lift and valet parking.   | demand for parking. This recommendation is appropriate under goal 9.  |
| 2. Supply parking to meet need.  | This goal is in direct contradiction with the goal to create a walkable community. The goal should instead be to minimize demand for parking. Only by providing commuters with a viable alternative to driving will the City will decrease demand for parking in downtown.                                    |
| 2.1.1 Maintain current parking minimum of one space per 600 square feet for office and adjust maximum to one space per 400 square feet.  | This policy recommendation increases the maximum for parking ratios. This undercuts goals 1, 5, 8, and 9. Rather than increase the maximum, the City should coordinate with RT to provide alternative modes of transportation to reduce the demand for parking.   |
| 2.1.3 Require that at least one space per unit for residential development be provided within 500 feet.  | Policy recommendations such as this, which address the problem of commuters using on-street parking in residential neighborhoods requires better management of existing on-street and off-street parking and permits, not increased parking.  |
| 2.1.4 Restrict residents of new residential developments from participating in the City's Residential Permit Parking program.  | The parking permit program should be expanded, not limited, and should perhaps include residential as well as worker permits so that the City can better manage use of parking supply and minimize the need for new parking spaces.   |
| 2.1.5 Require off-street parking for all retail and entertainment development in the Central City but allow for reduction in the required parking by as much as 100% for any retail or entertainment business in the Central City if it can be demonstrated that adequate publicly available off-street parking exists within a three-block radius of the subject site during the hours that the business would operate. | This might serve as a short term policy to better utilize existing parking structures and expand their hours of use. However, in the long term, this recommendation undercuts goals 1, 5, 8, and 9, and contradicts policy recommendation 5.2, to 'Minimize the land devoted to parking in the Central City.' |
| 2.5 Pursue opportunities to increase the amount of parking provided by existing facilities.  | Good.   |
| 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.  | Use the parking fund for expanding transit service in the central city.   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 9.1.1 Consider using shuttle services to link available parking with popular trip destination to address parking needs in areas without sufficient parking capacity. | Coordinated with RT and City Transit Master Plan. |
|--|---|

## **Conclusion**

The only way Sacramento will ever have a real downtown is if we begin to make it more difficult for individuals to drive into downtown and instead invest in transit services, parking demand management, better lighting and other pedestrian-oriented facilities that will increase the human presence on the street and thereby benefit downtown businesses. We strongly urge the City Council to insist on major changes to the Parking Master Plan reflective of these priorities prior to adoption of the Final Plan. Thank you for consideration of these recommendations.

Sincerely,

Graham Brownstein  
Executive Director, ECOS

Ann Kohl  
Co- V.P. Transportation and Air Quality, ECOS

Dorri Ziai  
Project Review and Analysis, ECOS

CC: Ray Kerridge, City Manager, City of Sacramento  
Fran Halbakken, Transportation Planner, City of Sacramento  
Kristy Day, Project Manager, The Hoyt Company  
Mike Wiley, Sacramento Regional Transit  
Traci Canfield, Sacramento Regional Transit  
Marilyn Bryant, Sacramento Transportation Management Association  
Jeane Borkenhagen, Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District  
Anne Geraghty, WalkSacramento  
Walt Seifert, Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates