



Council Agenda Report

From: Damian Nord, Police Chief

Subject: Parking Ad Hoc Committee Findings and Recommendations

CEQA Determination: The City finds that this action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State Guidelines Section State CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15060, subd. (c)(2)-(3), 15378.

Date: November 21, 2023

Facts

1. On June 6, 2023, the City Council directed the establishment of an ad hoc committee, comprised of Councilmember Chris Bausch and Councilmember Steve Gregory, to review the Downtown parking program. After review, the ad hoc committee is to return to City Council with recommendations for modifications to the existing parking program.
2. The Ad Hoc Committee convened four times between June and September, which included public feedback, staff presentations and comprehensive discussions. A brief outline of each meeting is as follows:
 - a. June 26, 2023, Parking Coordinator Donna King provided a brief presentation with chronological information on the parking program to date.
 - b. July 31, 2023, Councilmember Gregory led a discussion on the purpose of the Ad Hoc Committee and provided a summary review of what had been discussed to date.
 - c. August 21, 2023, Public Works Director, Freda Berman, presented the results of the parking garage study completed by Stantec and Administrative Services Director, Ryan Cornell, presented recent sales tax trends and data with a focus on the downtown area and the status of the parking in-lieu fee fund.
 - d. August 28, 2023, Administrative Services Director, Ryan Cornell, provided a brief overview of the monthly costs for the parking program and approximate costs for the existing trolley programs in Avila Beach and Morro Bay. Police Chief Damian Nord presented a summary of options presented to date and asked for consensus and direction from the Committee members.
3. At the close of the August 28th meeting, Chief Nord prepared a summary of options to determine consensus on recommendations from both Committee members to present to City Council.

Options

1. Take no action.
2. Modify the parking program, based upon Ad Hoc discussion and deliberation, which included the following options:
 - a. Offer free parking on Tuesdays and Wednesdays to encourage increased midweek downtown visitation.
 - b. Increase the cap on annual senior permits to encourage increased downtown visitation by seniors
 - c. Replace existing signage with updated messaging that clearly reflects parking regulations.

- d. Develop an outreach campaign to support Downtown businesses midweek and an education campaign to better inform customers about Downtown parking regulations.
3. Disband the temporary Parking Ad hoc Committee
4. Provide alternative direction to further modify or eliminate the parking program.

Analysis and Conclusions

City Council established the Ad Hoc Committee for the purpose of reviewing the parking program and determining, what, if any modifications (or termination) was necessary to improve customer experiences and the fiscal position of the parking program in the downtown area. At the final ad hoc committee meeting, Chief Nord presented a summary of options discussed to determine whether there was consensus between Councilmembers Bausch and Gregory. Councilmembers Bausch and Gregory agreed on the following recommendations to modify the program: 1) offering free parking on Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 2) offering additional senior permits; 3) update and improve the parking signs; and 4) utilize City staff to develop an outreach campaign. Separately, there was consensus on future study and additional discussion regarding the technology around timed parking.

Fiscal Impact

If no changes are made to the existing parking program, the program costs (minus parking fines) are expected to continue to exceed program revenues. A lack of revenue is attributable to the fact that nearly 90% of all parking sessions are free, since the first two-hours of a session are free. Some of the proposed changes discussed by the Ad Hoc Committee will likely exacerbate the structural funding deficit of the parking program by further reducing paid parking sessions and revenue. For instance, it is estimated that there will be an annual revenue loss of approximately \$37,000 by offering free parking on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

If approved, the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations will require the replacement of existing signs to enhance awareness of parking regulations and to reflect free days. The estimated cost to update existing signs is \$34,000. This estimate does not include costs associated with increasing the quantity or size of signs.

Any additional modifications to the program, including offering additional senior permits, a local permit program, and an outreach program will have associated costs that will vary dependent on the specifics of the modification. Although not expected to be significant in comparison to the signage update costs or free day revenue loss components, there will likely be staff time, materials, and promotional costs that are yet to be determined.

CEQA

The City finds that this action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State Guidelines Section State CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15060, subd. (c)(2)-(3), 15378 because it has no potential to result in either a direct, or reasonably foreseeable indirect, physical change in the environment.

Recommendation

Staff has no recommendation for this item and is requesting City Council direction.

Attachments

1. Parking Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Summaries