



## Council Agenda Report

From: Chris Huot, City Manager

Subject: Second Reading by Title Only and Adoption of Ordinance No. 1153, Amending Paso Robles Municipal Code Chapter 12.44.010 Regarding Employee Parking Permits

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: June 17, 2025

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### Facts

1. The Downtown Employee Permit Parking Pilot Program (the “program”) was approved by the City Council on October 16, 2018, to provide a low-cost parking option for downtown business owners and employees. As of January 2025, the City no longer has the dedicated staff or access to the technology to issue permits and as a result, there is no ability to provide enforcement for the lots. Therefore, the employee permit program as previously constituted is no longer operational.
2. The program was initially established prior to the implementation of paid on-street parking. The intent was to encourage employees to use designated parking lots, leaving on-street spaces available for customers.
3. The employee permit parking lots were located at:
  - Spring Street and 12th Street
  - 12th Street, adjacent to Marv’s Pizza
  - Alley between Pine Street and Railroad Street, 13th Street and 12th Street
  - 12th Street and Railroad Street
4. Downtown employees had the option to purchase monthly or annual parking permits, either individually or in bulk. Annual permits were prorated and cost \$5 per month.
5. These City-owned employee parking lots collectively include a total of 98 parking spaces.
6. The City Hall/Library and Train Station parking lots were previously part of the employee permit parking lot program, but have since been converted to first come, first served parking lots without timed or permit restrictions.
7. Additionally, the City has 30-minute on-street parking spaces aims to provide convenient short-term parking for customers. There are currently 35 such spaces in the downtown area, which remain available for quick errands.
8. In May 2024, the City Council ended the paid, on-street parking program. Most on-street parking spaces within the downtown area are now first come, first served, without any time restrictions. The 30-minute and disabled parking spots remain throughout the downtown area.
9. On August 20, 2024, City Council directed staff to review several elements of the employee parking lot program, including:
  - Research the ownership and usage restrictions of employee permit only parking lots
  - Research a reduced or no cost decal-based permit system
  - Explore options and associated costs of increasing enforcement

- Conduct outreach to downtown parking stakeholders
- 10. On December 3, 2024, staff presented its review and analysis of the program.
- 11. During that presentation a number of questions were raised regarding title or other limitations on the City's ability to terminate the exclusive use of these lots as employee parking lots.
- 12. Subsequent to that presentation, the City Council approved first reading by title only of an ordinance to eliminate the employee parking program as of January 1, 2025 and to return the parking lots to first come, first served public parking lots.
- 13. During the December 17, 2024 the City Council considered second reading to eliminate the employee parking program as of January 1, 2025. At that time, the City Council voted to continue the item to June 17, 2025 and directed staff to conduct additional stakeholder outreach on the topic.

### **Community Outreach**

Since December 2024, staff met with the following individuals, committees and organizations to receive additional feedback and input on the future utilization of the downtown parking lots:

- Main Street Association Board President Jeffry Weisinger
- Travel Paso
- Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance
- Paso Robles and Templeton Chamber of Commerce
- Main Street Association Design and Economic Development Committee
- Main Street Association Board of Directors

In each meeting, staff provided an overview of the presentation made to the City Council in December 2024 which included general background on the history of the lots, overview of a low-cost permit system, a review of enforcement capacity of the police department and discussion of the 30 minute on-street parking spaces. The presentations also included background information City staff's initial recommendation to return the parking lots to first come, first served public parking lots.

Representatives from Travel Paso, Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance, and Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce reviewed the presentation, asked staff questions and provided general feedback that favored the parking lots reverting back to first come, first served public parking lots that would be open to employees and patrons of downtown businesses.

Staff met three times with various individuals of the Main Street Association, including directly with Board President Jeffry Weisinger, the Design and Economic Development Committee, and Board of Directors. The Paso Robles Downtown Main Street Association provided the attached e-mail correspondence. In summary, the Main Street Association Board of Directors recommends the City revise the current Downtown Employee Parking Program. They recommend shifting from a permit-based system to a system that operates on an honor system—similar to the 30-minute parking spaces. The revised approach would open the lots to the public while designating them as "Employee Preferred Parking" without permits, enforcement or fines.

The feedback from the Main Street Association recommends:

- Removing "Permit Parking Only" signage.
- Installing new signs that indicate "Public Parking" and "Employee Preferred Parking," modeled after honor-based signage used by retailers in shopping center parking lots.
- Maintaining a program in a way that avoids enforcement and management costs but encourages employee use of the parking lots through goodwill and voluntary compliance.

## **Options**

1. Take no action;
2. Approve second reading by title only and adopt Ordinance 1153 deleting Section 12.44.010 of the Paso Robles Municipal Code;
3. Approve second reading by title only and adopt Ordinance 1153 deleting Section 12.44.010 of the Paso Robles Municipal Code and direct staff to implement “Employee Preferred Parking” signage in the Spring Street and 12th Street, 12th Street adjacent to Marv’s Pizza, Alley between Pine Street and Railroad Street, and 12th Street and Railroad Street lots and affirm that there will not be any ability for the Police Department to enforce non-employees from parking in these parking lots.
4. Provide alternative direction to staff.

## **Analysis and Conclusions**

This item was continued from the City Council’s December 17, 2025 meeting. The City Council requested the item return on the June 17, 2025 agenda for additional discussion after staff conducted additional outreach with downtown stakeholders.

The City owns, operates and maintains several public parking lots within the downtown area. Up until January 1, 2025, four of the City owned lots were designated for downtown employees with an applicable permit. Permit holders were granted exclusive access to the lots on a monthly or annual basis. The program was initially established prior to the implementation of paid on-street parking. The intent was to encourage employees to use designated lots, leaving on-street spaces available for customers. The police department could provide enforcement because the department maintained a list of permit holders and could cite users of the lots that did not have a permit.

Upon the termination of the on-street paid parking program, the City no longer had access to the technology that helped manage the employee permit program. Additionally, staff previously assigned to the management and operations of the downtown parking program were reassigned or left the organization. While permit signage still exists within the lots, there is no enforcement and there has not been issuance of any new permits. The legacy employee parking permit program essentially sunset on January 1, 2025. As of this time, no new permits are being issued, and no enforcement can occur within the lots as it relates to permits.

### Previous City Council Discussions

The City Council discussed this item at its [August 20, 2024](#), [December 3, 2024](#) and [December 17, 2024](#) meetings. Staff presented information on the ownership status of the parking lots, the feasibility of implementing a low-cost permit system to replace the existing system and an overview of enforcement challenges. A brief summary of each of these analysis areas are as follows:

### *Ownership of Parking Lots*

The four designated employee parking lots are owned by the City. Based on an exhaustive review of available property title reports, there are no restrictions placed on the use of these lots. Title reports for all four lots were conducted, and no legal constraints were identified, confirming that the City has full authority over their use and management. These lots were originally acquired and maintained by the City prior to the establishment of the Business Improvement District (BID) or the assessments that downtown businesses now remit to support the Main Street Association. The lots were not initially part of the BID or any specific revenue-generating program. Given that these parking spaces are owned outright by the City and have no restrictions on their use, they are fully under the City’s discretion for any future changes in policy or management.

### *Low Cost Permitting System*

Staff previously evaluated a low-cost decal program as a replacement for the existing employee parking program. The goal was to manage access to the same 98 designated parking spaces while minimizing the need for additional City staff.

Staff analyzed turnkey options and identified Data Ticket—a vendor capable of handling permit issuance, renewals, and employment verification—as a solution to streamline administration. Under the previous paid parking system, similar services were provided at no extra cost by the City’s payment vendor. The proposed Data Ticket program would similarly minimize staffing impacts.

Based on staff estimates, approximately 150 permits would be purchased annually at \$30 each—half the current rate—generating about \$4,500 in revenue. With an annual cost of \$9,500 (plus fees), the program would require a General Fund subsidy of roughly \$5,000, excluding enforcement and administrative expenses.

Staff previously recommended that a low-cost permit system not be pursued for several reasons, including that all on-street spaces are now first come, first-served, costs associated with facilitating the program will exceed program revenues, and the need to add enforcement resources (and associated costs) to ensure viability of the program.

### *Enforcement Challenges*

Prior to expiration of the Employee Permit Parking Program, it lacked dedicated enforcement, relying solely on complaint-driven responses due to staffing limitations. Effective enforcement of a formal permit program would require hiring additional staff—either a part-time employee at \$27,900 annually, which offers limited coverage, or a full-time employee at \$122,400, which provides broader oversight but increases costs and supervisory needs. Additionally, the absence of on-street parking restrictions in the downtown area weakens enforcement efforts, allowing employees to park in most spaces without consequence.

### 30 Minute Parking Spots

The 30-minute parking spots were originally implemented to offer short-term, free on-street parking. The 30-minute spots are intended solely for the purpose of running a quick errand that will take 30 minutes or less. Examples of uses for these spots include food delivery drivers picking up food from a downtown restaurant, a vendor dropping merchandise off at a downtown business, or a patron purchasing a good from a local merchant. These spots are meant to encourage very frequent turnover so that more people can have a chance to park in convenient locations. Staff has observed that most people are voluntarily adhering to the 30-minute time limits associated with these spots. Staff is not recommending any change to the 30-minute parking spots.

### Conclusions

Section 12.44.010 of the Paso Robles Municipal Code currently establishes an employee parking permit program for the downtown area and designates the City Manager to administer it. However, as detailed in this report, staff recommends the repeal of this section. All permits issued under the legacy program expired on January 1, 2025, and staff is not recommending a replacement low-cost permit program. As such, the existing code no longer reflects current parking policy or operational needs. Therefore, staff continues to recommend this section of the municipal code be deleted in its entirety.

Staff also recommends that the existing 30-minute parking spaces, which have proven effective in supporting short-term customer transactions, remain unchanged and continue to operate without additional enforcement. These spaces are important in maintaining convenient access for downtown patrons and supporting local businesses. No further action by the City Council is needed to retain the 30 minute spots.

If the City Council wishes to explore the addition of symbolic “Employee Preferred Parking” signage in City lots—as proposed by the Main Street Association—option 3 of this report provides a framework for that consideration. Even if this option is selected, staff still recommends repealing Section 12.44.010, as the signage does not constitute a formal permit program. Removing the section will provide clarity for all stakeholders regarding the City's current direction on this matter and will clean up obsolete municipal code language. Additionally, staff is requesting the City Council affirm for the record that the Police Department will not be able to cite individuals that park in these lots regardless of their status as a downtown employee or otherwise.

Lastly, the City Council has previously approved lighting and other improvements to the parking lots adjacent to Marv's Pizza and at 12th and Railroad Street. A construction contract has been awarded by the City Council, with work scheduled to begin in late June 2025 and expected completion in fall 2025. If option 3 is selected, staff will work with the contractor to ensure updated signage is added in tandem with the project.

#### **Fiscal Impact**

The cost to eliminate the employee parking program is nominal. Most of the costs will include staff time and materials to remove existing signage and install new signage. Should the City Council approve option 3, the cost to install new “Employee Preferred Parking” signs will be negligible.

#### **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.

#### **Recommendation (Option 2)**

Approve second reading by title only and adopt Ordinance 1153 deleting Section 12.44.010 of the Paso Robles Municipal Code.

#### **Attachments**

1. Ordinance 1153 – Amending Paso Robles Municipal Code Title 12 – Vehicles and Traffic
2. E-mail Correspondence from Main Street Association