

PROGRESSIVE PARKING POLICIES: A DIFFERENT LENS
Central Library – Third and E Streets
211 E St., Santa Rosa, California
February 3, 2010

Meeting Summary The City of Santa Rosa is hosting a series of meetings to consider and discuss progressive parking policies in Downtown Santa Rosa. This is the first of three meetings intended to identify downtown parking interests and shape policy recommendations for City Council's consideration.

I. Introductions Present: City: Jane Bender, David Gouin, Danielle O'Leary, Cheryl Woodward, Anne Oliver, Gillian Hayes, Peter Brown, Marisa Bjork. Public: Brian Anderson, Brant Arthur, Scott Bartley, Steve Birdlebough, Don Cobb, Christine Culver, Ben Cunningham, Ken Pedersen, Willard Richards.

Goals

- Explore the connection between parking policy and economic growth
- Consider together progressive parking policies for mutual benefit
- Develop consensual elements of parking policies for City Council consideration

II. Visualizing Parking Participants were asked to visualize a downtown where parking encourages economic vibrancy. Observations included:

- Better bus service easy to get through town; parking fees to support bus service; employers and employees parking in garages
- Parking citations: first offense = warning
- People walking; out of cars
- Perception of ample parking
- Buildings built out to sidewalks
- Fewer surface parking lots (buildings, pedestrians)
- 90 minutes free parking in garages
- Attractive well-maintained streetscape with amenities financed with parking fees
- Folks getting out of cars and walking to a unified Courthouse square
- Nightlife and day life; longer business hours; outdoor entertainment
- Expansion of perceived downtown encompassing more area attracting nightlife with parking to support that
- A few parking spaces available everywhere
- Parking hidden from view and allowing more active, accessible street faces
- Parking options understood and accepted by community
- Parking functions as economic empowerment

III. Parking History/
Current Reality Cheryl Woodward described what the parking district is and highlighted significant milestones in its history. Parking structures and lots were developed between 1950 and 1990; since then, focus has been on implementing technology to improve management of spaces and customer service with limited staff resources. Pay station technology has positioned us to explore Shoup's principles.

Moving forward, legislation. [SB618 Lowenthal](#)

Question:

What are the permits parking vs. regular parking? Priority goes to visitor parking, permits on the higher level.

Is the city going to update machine to accept dollars? Have looked at a number of cities, it is possible, most cities don't. Redwood City had offered an alternative where they put machines that accepted dollar bills sporadically throughout downtown.

Comments:

Change is so hard; people have a hard time accepting

Increase in Change

Paystations could have help to prevent citations - citizen

Room discussed current trends, tensions, myths, and perceptions.

- State considering incentives to end free on-street parking (SB 618, Lowenthal)
- Change is hard for people; have to just do it?
- New cooperation / collaboration between city departments (Parking, ED&H and CD all in the room today)
- People come to downtown NOT to *park* but shop, eat, etc.
- Parking is a transition activity and asset in overall transportation
- Confusing / multiple changes have occurred
- Safety is key
- Perception of congestion, queuing for parking
- Parking is paid for in some business's leases – so parking is not FREE
- *Seems* logical that downtown free parking would equal more customers and better experience
- Large number of business employees park on street
- Notice the parking options in downtowns that feel good
- Importance of turnover in parking (think restaurant tables)
- Free parking's been tried
- Business owners hear customers complaining about parking FINES not fees

Viewed brief Shoup presentation and discussed "Shoup Factors"

- Price parking to achieve an 85% occupancy level
 - Adjust meter hours to reflect the level of activity on street
 - Have a variable price structure that considers that parking is plentiful during certain hours of the day and heavily impacted during others
 - Price parking higher along streets in the core area and lower on those streets more distant from the core
- Manage turnover through pricing rather than artificial time limits
- Share the incremental meter revenue with the downtown areas or neighborhoods in which the revenue is generated
- Reduce or remove off-street parking requirements

Questions to address / research(*):

1. Will the City sell its antiquated mechanical meters?*
2. Interest in having change machines available on-street for those who do not have or choose not to use a debit or credit card at a pay

station.

3. Interest in having pay stations configured with bill accepters. What is the track record of such configurations elsewhere?
4. Consider model of market driven permits; spread impact to more garages (Fifth and Beaver Street garage as an example).
5. What is the future of the Parking District?
6. Want a period of free time in the garages.
7. Need to consolidate business associations' interests to have one voice.
8. Is there technology that will allow parkers to take any remaining time off the meter as they return to their vehicle?
9. How can we develop policies to avoid penalizing the poor?*
10. How do we stimulate garage use?
11. Interest in having permits to allow business use of loading zones (for vehicles without commercial plates or business info displayed on side of vehicle).
12. Reduce parking along Fifth Street to allow for outdoor seating.
13. Can money slated for garage construction be diverted to street improvements?
14. What is the average cost per parking space in a business renters' lease?*
15. How to disperse permits to create more equal and closer access to parking?

See also: Power Point and Flip Chart Summary

Coming Up

- Review Shoup's philosophy and his key recommendations
- Success stories from other communities, drawbacks experienced and why
- What interests/criteria should guide us?
- Small group activity using large maps of downtown to present an array of rates/times per street that reflect the interests developed

Adjournment