

Parking: The Big Picture--Recently we have made some big changes to parking in Downtown Redwood City. Why did we do this? What were we trying to accomplish? Is it working? Learn the answers to these questions and more below...

The Plan - All of the recent parking changes are part of a large and comprehensive plan. This plan was based on community input, best practices, and the latest cutting-edge parking research.

To download the entire Downtown Redwood City Parking Management Plan (PDF 1.19mb) click here.

Media Coverage - What do the Experts Think?

New York Times: *Gone Parkin' (are there environmental benefits to Redwood City's parking plan?)*

Wall Street Journal: *The Parking Fix*

SF Chronicle: *SF Plans Market Rates for Prized Parking Spaces (San Francisco may implement key components of Redwood City's innovative parking system)*

Channel 5 San Francisco: *Redwood City Parking Meters Use Latest Technology*

Salon.com: *We Paved Paradise (how Redwood City didn't)*

Pedshed.net: *Redwood City's Free Market Parking Meters (do they improve urban design?)*

The Latest Thinking About Parking Parking affects urban form, the environment, transit, economic development, government budgets, climate change, downtown revitalization plans, and much more: Deep thought and study is finally being dedicated toward this important subject. See how Redwood City fits into the really BIG picture...

Chapter 1 of *The High Cost of Free Parking* by Professor Donald Shoup. FAICP of UCLA

Time Magazine: *The New Science of Parking*

University of California Access Magazine: *The Old Pasadena Story: Turning Small Change into Big Changes*

Transportation and Land Use Coalition: *Housing Shortage/Parking Surplus - Silicon Valley's Opportunity to Address Housing Needs and Transportation Problems with Innovative Parking Policies*

Nelson/Nygaard Associates: *The Mythology of Parking*

The Great Communities Collaborative: *Is it Possible to Have too Much Parking?*

StreetFilms Interview on *The High Cost of Free Parking*

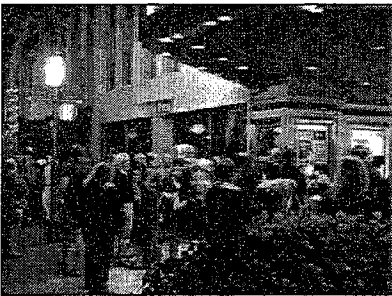
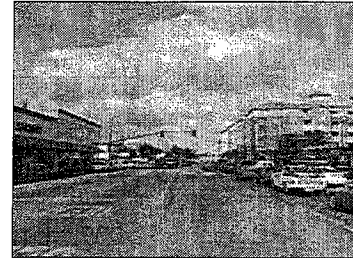
NY Times: *The Hunter-Gatherers. Parking Division (a fun look at the lengths that people will go to to get curbside parking in areas without effective parking pricing)*

The Forum at Redwood City is a series of educational discussions for city leaders and urban design professionals, taking place the first Thursday of each month. *The Forum* brings nationally-known speakers and presenters to Downtown Redwood City for in-depth dialogues on city design issues, such as street design, form-based codes, affordable housing, transit, and parking management.



By bringing together local government officials from throughout the Bay Area—as well as planners, engineers, urban designers, architects, other professionals in the urban design field, and local citizens and advocates—*The Forum* is intended to educate and foster discussion on new and emerging concepts in city planning and design. Interested members of the public are welcome to attend.

The Forum takes place on the first Thursday of each month from 6 to 7:30 pm at the Little Fox Theater, 2215 Broadway, in Downtown Redwood City. Doors open at 5:30 pm and the cost is \$10 per person, payable at the door. No RSVP is required. An optional no-host dinner with the speaker and other participants is generally held following *The Forum* for those wishing to continue the discussion.



Need more information?

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The Forum is co-sponsored by the Redwood City Redevelopment Agency and Communities By Design (CBD). CBD is a non-profit organization which provides urban design training, education and media to local government officials and community leaders who want to improve their communities

PARKING METERS AND REVENUE RETURN

Pasadena devised a creative parking policy that has contributed greatly to Old Pasadena's revival: it uses Old Pasadena's parking meter revenue (\$1.2 million in 2001) to finance additional public spending in the area.

Old Pasadena had no parking meters until 1993, and curbside parking was restricted only by a two-hour time limit. Customers had difficulty finding places to park because employees took up the most convenient curbside spaces, and moved their cars every two hours to avoid citations. The city's staff proposed installing meters to regulate curbside parking, but the merchants and property owners opposed the idea. They feared that paid parking would discourage people from coming to the area at all. Customers and tenants, they assumed, would simply go to shopping centers like Plaza Pasadena that offered free parking. Meter proponents countered that employees rather than customers occupied many curbside spaces, and making these spaces available for short-term parking would attract more customers. Any customers who left because they couldn't park free would also make room for others who were willing to pay if they could find a space, and who would probably spend more money in Old Pasadena if they could find a space.

Debates about the meters dragged on for two years before the city reached a compromise with the merchants and property owners. To defuse opposition, the city offered to spend all the meter revenue on public investments in Old Pasadena. The merchants and property owners quickly agreed to the proposal because they would directly benefit from it. The city also liked it because it wanted to improve Old Pasadena, and the meter revenue would pay for the project.

The desire for public improvements that would attract customers to Old Pasadena soon outweighed fear that paid parking would drive customers away. Businesses and property owners began to see the parking meters in a new light—as a source of revenue.

They agreed to an unusually high rate of \$1 an hour for curbside parking, and to the unusual policy of operating the meters on Sundays and in the evenings when the area is still busy with visitors. The city also didn't lose anything in the process. Because there had been no parking meters anywhere in the city before, returning the revenue to Old Pasadena didn't create a loss to the city's general fund. Indeed, the city gained revenue from overtime fines. Both business and government thus had a stake in the meter money, and so the project went ahead.

Only the blocks with parking meters receive the added services financed by the meter revenue. The city worked with Old Pasadena's Business Improvement District (BID) to establish the boundaries of the Old Pasadena Parking Meter Zone (PMZ). The city also established the Old Pasadena PMZ Advisory Board, consisting of business and property owners who recommend parking policies and set spending priorities for the zone's meter revenues. Connecting the meter revenue directly to added public services and keeping it under local control are largely responsible for the parking program's success. "The only reason meters went into Old Pasadena in the first place," said Marilyn Buchanan, chair of

the Old Pasadena PMZ, "was because the city agreed all the money would stay in Old Pasadena."

The city installed the parking meters in 1993, and then borrowed \$5 million to finance the "Old Pasadena Streetscape and Alleyways Project," with the meter revenue dedicated to repaying the debt. The bond proceeds paid for street furniture, trees, tree grates, and historic lighting fixtures throughout the area. Dilapidated alleys became safe, functional pedestrian spaces with access to shops and restaurants. To reassure businesses and property owners that the meter revenues stayed in Old Pasadena, the city mounted a marketing campaign to tell shoppers what their meter money was funding.

As the area attracted more pedestrian traffic, the sidewalks needed more maintenance. This would have posed a problem when Old Pasadena relied on the city for cleaning and maintenance, but now the BID has meter money to pay for the added services. The BID has arranged for daily sweeping of the streets and sidewalks, trash collection, removal of decals from street fixtures, and steam cleaning of Colorado Boulevard's sidewalks twice a month. Dedicating the parking meter revenue to Old Pasadena has thus created a "virtuous cycle" of continuing improvements. The meter revenue pays for public improvements, the public improvements attract more visitors who pay for curb parking, and more meter revenue is then available to pay for more public improvements.

Old Pasadena's 690 parking meters yielded \$1.2 million net parking revenue (after all collection costs) to fund additional public services in FY 2001. The revenue thus amounts to \$1,712 per meter per year. The first claim on this revenue is the annual debt service of \$448,000 that goes to repay the \$5 million borrowed to improve the sidewalks and alleys. Of the remaining revenue, \$694,000 was spent to increase public services in Old Pasadena, above the level provided in other commercial areas. The city provides some of these services directly; for example, the Police Department provides additional foot patrols, and two horseback officers on weekend evenings, at a cost of \$248,000. The parking enforcement officers who monitor the meters until well into the night further increase security, at no additional charge. The city also allocated \$426,000 of meter revenue for added sidewalk and street maintenance and for marketing (maps, brochures, and advertisements in local newspapers). Drivers who park in Old Pasadena finance all these public services, at no cost to the businesses, property owners, or taxpayers.

Old Pasadena has done well in comparison with the rest of Pasadena. Its sales tax revenue increased rapidly after parking meters were installed in 1993, and is now higher than in the other retail districts in the city. Old Pasadena's sales tax revenues quickly exceeded those of Plaza Pasadena, the nearby shopping mall that had free parking. With great fanfare, Plaza Pasadena was demolished in 2001 to make way for a new development with storefronts that resemble the ones in Old Pasadena. Would Old Pasadena be better off today with dirty sidewalks, dilapidated alleys, no street trees or historic street lights, and less security, but with free curb parking? Clearly, no. Old Pasadena is now a place where everyone wants to be, rather than merely another place where everyone can park free. As the signs on Old Pasadena's parking meters say, "Your meter money makes a difference."