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February 22, 1999

City Council
Sacramento, California

Honorable Members in Session:

SUBJECT: Short-Term Parking Solutions

LOCATION: Council District 1

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is for Council information only.

CONTACT PERSON: Mark S. Miller, Parking Operations Manager

FOR COUNCIL MEETING OF: March 2, 1999

SUMMARY:

This report provides information on the efforts underway to increase off-street parking capacity quickly to address increases in parking demand and to meet the City's parking-related contractual obligations related to development of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA) building at 10th & I Streets. Steps being taken to meet this new demand include restriping of existing parking lots and development of temporary surface parking lots.

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION ACTION:

None.

BACKGROUND:

This report is an initial follow up to a City Council workshop on parking needs conducted in May of 1998. At that work session staff identified increases in parking demand in the City's Downtown area. The Mayor and City Council directed staff to explore short-term, low cost steps that could be taken to maximize existing parking resources and to meet City's contractual obligations to provide parking for the Cal EPA office building that is currently under construction. This report describes plans to create 700 to 1,000 new parking spaces in the Downtown area as well as efforts to reduce Downtown parking demand by encouraging use of alternative transit usage and by making peripheral parking available. Another workshop has been scheduled for late April 1999 to provide the Mayor and City Council with long-term options for more extensive expansion of the City's parking capacity.

The Cal EPA Agreement

Construction began on office space housing the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA) in 1998. When that structure is completed in mid-2000, the City has agreed to provide Cal EPA with up to 1,300 parking spaces. 750 parking permits are to be made available in the City parking garage at Tenth & I Streets (Lot I). An additional 550 spaces are to be available to Cal EPA employees in parking facilities located within a five block radius of the Cal EPA building.

Additional Parking Capacity

Parking capacity can be increased in ways that can be accomplished sooner and with less expense than constructing new parking garages.

- Parking lots and garages within five blocks of the Cal EPA building can support greater customer loads through restriping and by issuing greater numbers of monthly permits than has been the City's practice in past years.
- Additional parking capacity can also be created through development of surface parking lots.

The least costly way to expand parking capacity is to squeeze more parking spaces into lots already operated by the City. More spaces are created by:

- Making parking stalls narrower;
- Changing layouts; and,
- Reducing the slant used for angled parking within the lots.

These changes would create about 472 new spaces in the City's parking system. About 177 of these new spaces would be in Lot I (Tenth & I Streets) and Lot H (Tenth & L Streets) within the five-block radius needed to meet Cal EPA obligations. These modifications can be performed with funds and authority already approved by the Mayor and City Council. A traffic-engineering firm has been engaged to develop specifications. The Public Works Department will perform some of the restriping and private contractors will do the rest.

There is unused parking capacity in Lots C (Fourteenth and H Streets) and K (Seventh & J Streets). In addition, some of the several hundred parking spaces that are currently used by transient parkers in Lots H and I could be sold to monthly Cal EPA workers and City employees instead.

Surface parking lots have not been approved in recent years because they are thought to be unsightly, even with landscaping and other beautification efforts. In addition, surface parking lots generate revenues that may delay property owners from developing more appropriate uses. Surface parking lots, however, can be built more inexpensively and quickly than parking structures. A parking stall in a surface parking lot on leased land can be provided in five months for less than \$1,000 per space, compared to spaces in parking garages that cost approximately \$15,000 per space and require two years to plan and construct.

Recognizing the City's need for short-term parking solutions, the Planning Commission adopted new standards for review and approval of surface lots at their February 11, 1999 meeting. The Downtown & Regional Enterprises Parking Division plans to work with property owners and parking operators to develop at least three new surface parking lots in the downtown area that meet the Planning Commission standards. These lots will be controlled by the City, located within five blocks of the Cal EPA building, and operational prior to Cal EPA building completion. In conjunction with other measures being taken to increase capacity, these surface lots will meet the City's Cal EPA obligation and minimize the impact of the Cal EPA building on existing City parking customers.

Other Steps

The City Council adopted policies in June 1998 that have increased the number of carpool permits available to customers in City parking facilities.

- Joint efforts are being made by City and Regional Transit District (RT) staff to cooperate on programs increasing use of regional mass transit. These include marketing a limited number of discounted accesses to City parking facilities for mass transit riders. Persons will be more likely to use alternative transportation if they have access to reasonably priced parking on days when they must drive their personal vehicle.
- City and Sacramento County parking managers have agreed to share monthly parking permit customer lists available to RT so that the Transit District can more effectively and economically target commuters with marketing materials that promote transit.
- State of California representatives agreed, in concept, that commuters to Downtown Sacramento may use excess capacity in State-operated peripheral parking lots. Cost would equal amounts paid by State employees. The City would be required to provide a shuttle service from the lots to Downtown or to reimburse the State for shuttle costs. Sacramento County has also expressed interest in this alternative and efforts will be made to formalize this agreement over the next few months.

- The City Traffic Engineering Group has converted 23 blocks in mid-town from parallel to diagonal parking, adding approximately 208 spaces.

Even with the efforts described, Cal EPA employees will displace some Lot I monthly parking permit holders when the Cal EPA building is occupied. When this occurs, every effort will be made to accommodate these customers at other City facilities. New Lot I parking customers are being advised of this situation.

The above actions represent short-term "fixes" that, without additional action by the City, will be inadequate to meet the long-term parking needs of Downtown Sacramento. A City Council work session is planned for this Summer during which staff will present information on governance of the parking function, financing of new facilities, location of new facilities, and service delivery strategies. The Mayor and City Council will, at that time, be asked to provide direction and approval for more comprehensive parking solutions.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Funds are available in the Parking Fund for restriping existing parking facilities at a cost of less than \$100,000. Developing new surface parking lots will cost approximately \$300,000 and may involve ongoing land lease payments. These costs will be offset by more than \$700,000 in new parking revenues generated from increased parking spaces available for lease. Detailed discussion of these long-term options will be included in the workshop session scheduled for Council in April 1999.

ENVIROMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

This action is exempt under Section 15273 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA does not apply to the modification of restructuring of rates, tolls and other charges for the purpose of meeting operating expenses, obtaining funds for capital projects necessary to maintain services, and meeting financial reserve needs and requirements.

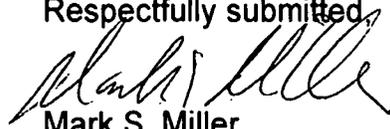
POLICY CONSIDERATIONS:

These actions are consistent with City Council's policy to encourage and support activities that stimulate economic development in the downtown.

MBE/WBE CONSIDERATION:

Any goods or services accessed in implementing changes described in this report will be acquired in a manner consistent with City MBE/WBE policies.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark S. Miller
Parking Operations Manager

RECOMMENDATION APPROVED:



WILLIAM H. EDGAR
City Manager

for:

APPROVED:



Thomas V. Lee
Deputy City Manager