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City Council

Parking Strategic Plan

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Agenda Item:
Parking Strategic Plan

Issue:
Council requested an update on downtown parking and an opportunity to review and discuss strategies.

Committee Recommendation:
General Government Committee considered recommendations from the Parking and Business Improvement Area's (PBIA) Parking Advisory Committee at their June 19, 2012 meeting regarding "a more friendly approach to downtown parking". The PBIA's recommendations are included as Attachment 3.

City Manager's Recommendation:
Provide feedback and direction regarding parking program operations, potential amendments to the parking ordinance and next steps for the parking program.

Staff Contact:
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Background and Analysis:
The 2009 Parking Strategic Plan was developed to set the foundation for the City to create an extraordinary parking system for our downtown community, the Vision for which is:

- A ticket-free experience
- Easy to access
- Convenient for both short- and long-term users
- Intuitive
- Adaptable
- Financially sound

The intent is to provide a parking system in the downtown retail core that is primarily available for retail users and operated efficiently with neither too many nor too few parking stalls available at any one time. According to Dr. Donald Shoupe (see Attachment 1) in his update to the High Cost of Free Parking, and Todd Litman (Attachment 2) in his work for the Victory Transport Policy Institute, "Experts recommend setting prices to maintain 85-90% occupancy rates; this is called *performance-based* or *responsive* pricing (Shoup 2005)." Olympia manages its parking system towards this objective. Occupancy rates in downtown often exceed 85% in the downtown core indicating that patrons are still fully utilizing available spaces in the

retail core.

Three and nine hour meters are managed to provide longer term and less frequent turnover stalls outside the downtown stalls. These stalls are occupied by a mix of residents, shoppers and employees in downtown. They often have utilization rates well below 85%.

It is also important to note that the City is only one player in the downtown parking system. The City controls all of the on-street parking; however, the city controls less than 3% of the off-street stalls in downtown. The City's 236 off-street (parking lot) stalls are not intended to accommodate all of the users of downtown and we, therefore, need to be very strategic in how we decide to use this limited resource. The City's off street stalls are used to offer a convenient and cost effective parking location to downtown employees. In order to be competitive in this market it is important that the City offer stalls that are well located, well lit and in parking lots that are clean, safe and well appointed.

The plan contains three main goals, with specific strategies related to each goal:

1. Develop a parking system that pays for itself
2. Ensure the right person is in the right space
3. Condense parking so land is available for development

At Tuesday's meeting, staff will report on progress made on these goals and what is left to do moving forward into 2013. Staff will also give a status update on:

- Parking pay stations - financial report, occupancy, and status of relocation project
- Parking Program financial update - overview of revenue streams and parking special fund
- Ideas for a more friendly approach to downtown parking
- Role and relationship of the Downtown Ambassador Program
- Parking Services next steps and future issues - review of residential parking program, surface lot cleanup and temporary use issues, amendments to parking regulations to help make the system more user friendly, program expansion of hours and geography.

Options:

N/A - Briefing and discussion only.

Financial Impact:

None.