



City Council

Approval of a Resolution Adopting Phase II of the Parking Strategy

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Title

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Recommended Action

Committee recommendation:

The Land Use and Environment Committee recommends approval of the resolution adopting Phase II of the Parking Strategy as amended.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve the resolution adopting Phase II of the Parking Strategy as amended by the Land Use and Environment Committee.

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve a resolution adopting the final draft of Phase II of the Parking Strategy.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Max DeJarnatt, Parking Program Analyst

Background and Analysis:

Parking is consistently identified as a challenge for Downtown businesses, workers, visitors, and residents. As desired redevelopment occurs, the existing parking supply is becoming further constrained by the removal of existing surface parking lots and some on-street parking stalls. At the same time more residential, visitor and business activity is encouraged. Olympia expects to absorb 5,000 new residents in downtown in the 20 years between 2014-2034.

Downtown Strategy Recommendation

The Downtown Strategy identified an updated Downtown Parking Strategy as among its Transportation objectives, and emphasized that a parking strategy will help advance Economic

Development priorities as well. Olympia adopted its most recent Parking Strategy in 2009.

The Downtown Strategy guided that the Parking Strategy:

- Be coordinated with the Downtown Strategy and anticipate future needs;
- Evaluate projected changes in travel mode, management tools, the potential for structured parking, new technologies and signage;
- Consider changes to how existing parking is managed, the amount of parking required for new development and the residential parking program.

Parking Strategy

The public process to update Olympia's Parking Strategy kicked off in October 2016. About 2,600 people participated through online surveys and stakeholder interviews to identify guiding principles and specific challenges. The City's consultants inventoried and surveyed on- and off-street parking, noting use type and utilization rates. The resulting Parking Strategy identifies priorities and realistic, impactful actions to update the City's parking management and support our community's downtown vision over the next 10 years.

The Parking Strategy states, *"The City designs and implements parking management programs so that people have access to predictable short- and long-term parking, so that Downtown Olympia is a vibrant, attractive urban destination, and so that Olympia has a stable and thriving economy."* The following are guiding principles:

The City of Olympia's ideal Downtown parking system:

1. Supports a vibrant and attractive Downtown.
2. Recognizes the value of on-street parking to support retail uses in the Downtown core.
3. Is convenient and intuitive for short- and long-term users.
4. Compliments people's choices to walk, bike, share a ride, or take the bus Downtown.
5. Encourages the efficient use of parking to implement land use goals.
6. Is financially sound.
7. Is flexible, adaptable, and innovative to meet changing needs and demands.

These guiding principles inform and guide short- and long-term decision-making for the Downtown parking system and support other goals for Downtown. The guiding principles help to define the role of the City in providing and managing parking downtown, as well as connect to desired outcomes such as supporting local businesses, active and lively streets, and new housing. The guiding principles also address key management issues such as whether the system pays for itself. The guiding principles enable the City to adapt to changing conditions over time and achieve long-term success in providing and managing parking in the Downtown.

A link to the Parking Strategy is **attached**. The report has three major components:

1. An overview of guiding principles, study areas, and data collection.
2. Seven strategies for addressing different aspects of the parking system.
3. Five Market Study planning horizon scenarios.

The seven strategies address parking scarcity through a variety of approaches:

- Increase efficiency of enforcement with improved technology.
- Use price and enforcement hours to ensure on-street parking availability and decrease congestion.
- Improve access to off-street parking facilities for longer-term users.
- Support alternative modes of transportation to decrease or disperse demand.
- Address unique needs of various user groups (e.g. Downtown residents, employees, event parking, disabled drivers.)

Included with each strategy are a series of actions and the timeframe for implementation.

Residential Parking Program Amendment

The original draft of the parking strategy included fee increases for the residential parking program extending south to the South Capitol Neighborhood (SCNA). During an open house in 2018 the Neighborhood Association raised concerns about the fee increases. The Association was concerned that because the strategy is focused on Downtown, its recommendations should only impact those areas within the Downtown border. The Land Use & Environment Committee guided that staff remove the SCNA areas from the recommendations, and that the City revisit parking management in that neighborhood through a separate parking strategy to be developed with the association later this year.

Next Steps

Priorities for implementation include Phase I items recommended by Council in November 2017:

- Explore the feasibility of a parking structure,
- Consider implementation of meter and permit price increases to ensure on-street availability,
- Deploy a downtown employee outreach/education program to transition longer-term employee parking to off-street facilities,
- Provide bus passes to low income downtown employees, and
- Spearhead a city-led voluntary shared parking pilot program with private lot owners surrounding the Entertainment character area.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

In 2015, the Thurston County Economic Development Council surveyed Downtown Olympia businesses and found that parking ranked among their most pressing concerns. An estimated 2,600 people engaged in formation of the Parking Strategy. Summaries of what staff heard at a 2017 open house and online survey are **attached**.

Options:

1. Move to adopt by resolution the Parking Strategy as amended by the Land Use and Environment Committee
2. Do not adopt the Parking Strategy at this time.
3. Refer the Parking Strategy back to Land Use and Environment Committee for further discussion of specific issues.

Financial Impact:

Costs to implement the parking strategy and potential revenues will vary, and are described within the strategy.

Attachments:

Resolution

Parking Strategy

Open House Summary

Olympia Parking Survey Summary

Link to Parking Strategy Web Page