



MEETING DATE: 05/03/04

ITEM NO. 19

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: APRIL 28, 2004
TO: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL
FROM: DEBRA J. FIGONE, TOWN MANAGER
SUBJECT: ACCEPT STATUS REPORT ON DOWNTOWN PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN, AND PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF FOR ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION.

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept status report and staff's direction on Downtown Parking Management Plan, and/or provide additional direction to staff for future ongoing implementation.

BACKGROUND:

The Parking Management Plan (PMP) adopted by Council in December 2001, is a comprehensive plan that was developed to address the issues related to parking adequacy of the commercial parking supply in downtown Los Gatos. The plan, developed by consulting firm KAKU and Associates, expanded the scope of analysis as compared to previous studies, to incorporate and balance the concerns of businesses, visitors and residents in meeting specific parking demands and needs. The study provided an analysis of existing conditions of all available parking locations in the defined area and the focus was on realistic, long-term solutions based on the magnitude of any parking shortages. None of the recommendations put forth in a previous study that incorporated paid parking solutions (i.e., meters, parking structure, parking charges) were found favorable and none were implemented. Council's direction for the KAKU study was to maintain free parking for visitors in all public parking spaces.

PREPARED BY: SCOTT R. SEAMAN
Chief of Police

Scott R. Seaman

Reviewed by: [Signature] Assistant Town Manager [Signature] Town Attorney [Signature] Clerk [Signature] Finance
[Signature] Community Development Revised: 4/30/04 10:42 am

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With input from the residential and business community, Los Gatos High School, the Parking Commission and Town staff, KAKU and Associates provided a detailed analysis and recommended measures to address parking deficiencies. The plan included three phases: 1) implementation of a comprehensive Parking Management Plan; 2) expansion and reconfiguration of the Verizon/Post Office lots and Lot 6; and, 3) modification of the Town Code to allow certain property owners to lease or rent approved excess parking spaces. Staff has fully implemented one parking zone, completed segments of phases one and two and continues to work on project components and modifications as directed by Council. On going evaluation and community input provided the opportunity to consider adjustments, analyze feedback and make appropriate changes to the parking plan.

DISCUSSION:

The following discussion will update Council on major elements of the Parking Management Plan progress to date, current projects, Council directives, and future options to consider for the PMP. On September 3, 2003, Council gave direction to staff to further explore and prepare recommendations on projects included in the following discussion. Staff is involved in communication and field studies with the Palo Alto and Menlo Park parking authorities to enhance the Town's endeavors in planning and to learn from their evaluations of similar parking projects.

The parking program is facing staff reductions of two parking control officers in the proposed 2004/05 budget. Significant efforts are being made to reduce expenses in other areas of the parking budget including, supply and equipment expenditures, overtime, and the holiday valet program. Parking citation revenue projections are expected to remain at the 2003/04 fiscal year level.

A. Progress to date

1. Parking Permits

Employee parking permits are a key element of the PMP. Permits were implemented and available January 2003, for the employees working in the Olive Zone. The development of this project involved new software, training, developing policies and procedures, designing permits and communicating with the business community. Fees for construction parking permits have also been recently implemented. Previously, construction parking permits were issued at no charge to independent contractors for construction projects downtown. The parking of multiple construction vehicles, and at times for a duration of 30 days or more, reduced parking availability for visitors.

2. Implementation of the Olive Zone

The Olive Zone has been in operation since January 2003. The program has been evaluated, and is receiving positive feedback from the businesses while achieving the parking objectives of the zone. The zone concept of not allowing return parking received some criticism and has been a concern of Council. These incidents have been minimal and are reviewed on a case to case basis. Evaluation demonstrates that the parking issues unique to this area have been successfully resolved and critical parking problems have been mitigated. While staff has considered removing the Olive Zone designation for this area and thus allowing return

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visits, feedback from citizens, businesses and the Transportation and Parking Commission supports continuing with the Olive Zone as is.

3. **Implementation of new residential parking districts and addition of streets to existing permit districts**

Bella Vista Avenue and Jackson Street are residential areas that were added as a part of the PMP proposal. Residents at 254-262 East Main Street petitioned for permit parking and this location was added. The locations that were added to existing parking districts are Almendra Ave. between Tait and Massol, Bachman Avenue from Tait to Massol, and West Main Street from Lyndon to Bayview.

4. **Completed the construction of the South Side lot (formerly Bus Depot Lot) and improvements on the North Side Lot**

The South Side Lot was redesigned for 17 spaces and work included resurfacing, curbs, landscaping, new signs and lighting. Improvements to the North Side Lot and South Side Lot were completed and the lots were made available for public parking by August 2003.

5. **Increased parking inventory on public lots and downtown streets**

The downtown parking inventory has been increased by approximately 75 spaces. The added spaces were achieved by recovering improperly and inefficiently marked spaces, painting curbs, moving handicap stalls, improving signage, lot reconfiguration and leasing the Verizon property.

6. **Holiday Valet Parking**

The 2003 holiday valet program concluded this year with a 50% increase in valet utilization over 2002. The program has been successful in providing additional parking for employees and shoppers during the holiday season and also provided support to the business community with the "Shop Los Gatos" promotion. Data was also gathered on parking lot utilization of all the municipal lots.

B. Current Projects

1. **Montebello Lot construction and lease commencement**

Staff negotiated and completed lease agreements with Verizon, U.S. Postal Service and Toll/Opera House amendments and obtained PUC approval for the Montebello Parking Lot. The lot was redesigned and 28 spaces were added. Construction was completed by mid April 2004. Lease commencement with Verizon and the U.S. Postal Service will begin May 1, 2004 which coincides with the time the lot will be ready for public use.

2. **Residential parking permit locations**

The following streets or locations were approved by Council to be included in parking permit districts. These areas were to be implemented with the proposed Zone Parking Plan because all the signs could be replaced with all the new regulations at the same time. Since the Zone Parking Plan is still under consideration for a future phased implementation, the residents

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have requested the following parking permit locations be completed. Implementation is underway and/or completed for the following areas:

1. Villa Avenue (from Jackson to 162 Villa)
2. West Main Street (from 235 West Main to Bayview)
3. Montebello Home Owners Association (Six condos at 135 West Main)

3. **Way-Finding/signage/consistency**

To accomplish the way-finding goals, Council directed staff to provide clear direction to all downtown parking lots with a clear understanding of parking regulations. The Town Manager's Office, Engineering and Parking Departments are working together in preparing conceptual designs and layout for a signage plan to accomplish these goals. Base maps have been prepared and all existing lot identification and directional signs have been plotted. Field studies will be conducted for new sign locations then reviewed by a selected focus group for their input on concepts and clarity. To test the design and layout concepts, Lot 1 (between Highway 9 and Bachman Ave.) will be designed first and presented to a variety of stakeholders for review and comments. Project completion is expected during the fall of 2004.

As a continuation of way-finding to provide clarity and consistency, a residential permit district sign plan layout will be prepared. The plan will have all the signs consistent with 2 hour parking, 9 A.M. to 6 P.M., except by permit and permit parking only 9 P.M. to 6 A.M. Base maps will be prepared to layout the locations of all the residential permit districts and sign locations and then followed up by a construction plan. Staff is intending to move forward on this element of the PMP independent of the time line to implement zones in the downtown. Sign and curb clarification involves replacing missing signs, poles, adding signs where needed, and painting curbs for various regulations. Through this process, clarification is given to regulatory signs and parking inventory is increased with proper signing; reconfiguring and identifying parking spaces. Curbs have been painted to add or change 30 minute zones and loading zones.

Staff is also considering developing signs or kiosk type displays that could include maps with a "you are here" mapping concept, incorporating specific locations, businesses and parking lots. This would enhance visitor way finding and the Town's economic vitality efforts to promote the business community.

C. Parking Management Plan components in study for future consideration

1. **Employee Parking Permits in the downtown core**

Only the Olive Zone has employee permits in place. Employee permits have been available since January 2003. The program has received favorable feedback from the businesses in this zone and downtown businesses have requested employee permits. Recommendations and planning are underway in consideration of expanding employee permit parking to the downtown core. Under such a program, permits would be valid in designated spaces in lots 1,2,3,4, and 6. Further study is underway to define the number of spaces and a plan for the

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optimum permit program, which could be a possible alternative to the zones. Staff is sensitive, however, to implementing this system if the business community would find it a negative feature at this time given the current business climate.

2. **Utilization of private parking lots**

Staff views private lots as a possible parking resource for other business lease use or use by visitors with specified signage and permission. A parking lot space count and matrix is currently being compiled and the data will be analyzed. Staff continues to explore alternatives for this resource. We have been approached by business owners asking if the Town would be receptive to their providing valet parking by using private or public lots. The request is under review.

3. **Other alternative parking permit concepts**

Staff is evaluating one day parking permits or a frequent visitor permit for a yearly fee to purchase for unlimited parking downtown. These permits would be available to visitors and could be purchased at the Police Department, Town Hall, and possibly at the Chamber of Commerce. This concept is utilized in Palo Alto where a daily parking permit costs \$15 a day. This offers an alternative parking solution for all day parking. Staff will continue to develop this concept.

7. **Concepts to enhance economic vitality**

Other concepts staff has had on a list to explore, include small shuttles to transport citizens from the outlying lots and the strategic use of valet parking during special events and during peak impact times. The West Valley Cities are interested in exploring small shuttles in combination with the VTA. The Town may want to wait for that process to get underway. Valet and shuttles could be explored as possible ways to enhance convenience to visitors and employees during the 2005/2006 downtown repaving project.

CONCLUSION:

Staff continues to assess downtown parking issues with direction from the Town Council in ensuring that parking options are consistent with the Parking Management Plan and include adjustments as necessary to achieve the plan's goals. Staff has completed the majority of parking lot reconfiguration and upgrades, with additional work to be calendared for Lot 6. Responding to both Council direction and business and community input, staff does not plan to proceed with implementation of the remaining zones in the downtown core at this time. Council directed that implementation of any zones during the 2003 holiday season be deferred due to the ongoing effects of the economic climate and the possibility of staff reductions to the program. Unless otherwise directed, it is our assumption that it is Council's desire to continue deferral until parking demand warrants its reconsideration. In the meantime, staff has initiated a way finding project and is continuing to explore an employee permit program which would not be dependent upon the implementation of a zone system. Staff will continue to implement changes to sign regulation consistency. Staff requests Council direction regarding continuing the implementation of the zone concept and on implementation of the other elements discussed in this report.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

The Parking management Project is a project as defined under CEQA but is statutorily exempt under Section 15262 Of the State Environmental Guidelines, as adopted by the Town. A Notice of Exemption will be filed.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Each project listed in this report has a budgeted source of funds which has been approved by Council or will be included for approval in the 2004-05 proposed operating budget and capital improvement project budgets. These sources include Redevelopment Agency Funds for appropriate operating and capital costs and the Parking Fund as supplemented by the General Fund.

Distribution:

General

cc: Phil Johnson, Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce
Ronee Nassi, Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce
Transportation and parking Commission